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MALD PAPER

“A TRUE POLITICAL INSTRUMENT?”

THE CURRENT GERMAN DEBATE ON THE ROLE OF FORCE

SUBMITTED TO PROFESSOR HENRIKSON

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BY

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"We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy, but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means"

-- Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*
Book One, Chapter One, Section 24

Introduction

In looking at the future of the Atlantic Alliance in his book, *NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance*, Lawrence Kaplan wrote "as long as there is uncertainty about German military forces participating in a conflict outside NATO borders, NATO capabilities will be severely limited."¹ Despite a 1994 ruling by the German Constitutional Court which removed the apparent legal restrictions on German participation out of the NATO area, Germany remains reluctant to engage actively in joint military operations. Nevertheless, the German armed forces are undergoing a fundamental restructuring which will, for the first time since Germany's rearmament in 1955, create units which are tailored to missions other than strict national territorial defense.

Compared to European allies such as France and Great Britain, Germany remains far from "normal" in matters dealing with the use of force as an instrument of national policy. The mere creation of specialized military units will not change this trait overnight. American policy makers must understand the fundamental limitations on what Germany can be expected to contribute in future NATO operations such as the peace implementation mission currently underway in Bosnia.

This paper will therefore analyze the deep divisions which exist within Germany regarding the role of force in international relations. The first section concerns the influence of history, law, and military practice have shaped current attitudes toward military power and the role of the armed forces in a democratic society. This is followed by an analysis of the positions of the major German political parties across the spectrum from Right to Left. Next, specific trends are

¹Lawrence S. Kaplan, *NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), p. 179.

identified which are working to force Germany toward a decision in favor of professionalizing its armed services. Finally, the impact of the gradual evolution of Germany's view of the role of force on its relations with the United States and the European Union is considered.

It should be noted at the beginning, however, that this analysis focuses primarily on the past experiences and current debate within western Germany regarding the role of force. The 17 million German citizens who live in the territory of the former East Germany have their own unique perspectives which may indeed differ from those of their western cousins. The East German armed forces, the National People's Army (*Nationale Volksarmee, NVA*) was not the enlightened democratic institution which the modern western *Bundeswehr* tries so hard to represent.

General Jörg Schönbohm, the West German commander who took control of forces in Eastern Germany after unification has written an insightful account of the initial contrasts which were evident in the merger of the *NVA* with the *Bundeswehr* titled *Two Armies and One Fatherland*. One constant worry in East Germany which did not fade immediately after unification was the fear of being under constant observation.² Under the Communist East German regime, each military unit which had more than fifty soldiers was supposedly assigned a political officer who acted as a "shadow."³

While the East German regime may have inspired fear and suspicion, it also managed to gain the loyalty of at least a portion of its citizens. In an interesting contrast with other

²Schönbohm, p. 53.

³Kenneth S. Kilimnik, "Germany's Army After Reunification: The Merging of the Nationale Volksarmee into the Bundeswehr, 1990-1994," *Military Law Review*, Summer, 1994, p. 11.

Communist bloc countries, the East German state was able to co-opt the established Protestant Church to a degree unexpected in a system supposedly founded on atheistic principles. One of the last official histories of the *NVA* quotes the testimony of an East German soldier who proclaimed before a political convention in 1982, "I live as a Christian in a society which accepts me and which makes it possible for me to practice my faith freely. Our republic and its achievements must be preserved against any attack and also militarily defended. Our army is for the first time in German history an army of peace."⁴

Although soldiers with strong political affiliations with the Communist Party or the secret police have since been released from military service, there are over 9,000 former *NVA* soldiers currently serving in the *Bundeswehr*.⁵ Additionally, for some time to come, young men drawn as conscripts from the five new states of eastern Germany will still have direct memory of a different society and a different army. Thus the leaders of a now unified Germany must not only deal with the common legacy of the *Reichswehr* of the Weimar Republic and the *Wehrmacht* of World War II, but also with the unique experience of former East Germans under 40 years of Communist dictatorship. Their ultimate influence on unified Germany's perception of the role of force is uncertain, but should not be carelessly dismissed.

The Influence of History, Law, and Military Practice

An understanding of current German reluctance to use military force must begin with a look at how the German armed forces were recreated following the nation's destruction, defeat,

⁴*Armee für Frieden und Sozialismus*, (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR, 1985), p. 674

⁵Roman Herzog, "Verteidigung der Freiheit," *Europäische Sicherheit*, July 1996, p. 13.

and division in 1945. The objective in rearming Germany ten years after World War II was not to bring back a robust German military, but rather to sharply curtail the country's ability to use force for any purpose other than national defense and to eliminate the influence of the military on domestic politics. Given the horrors unleashed by the forces of the Wehrmacht in World War II, this extremely limited role for the German military was most desirable and it was woven into the fabric of Western Germany's politics and society.

Germany today is not a 'normal' nation with regard to the use of force. Although the United States and other allies might hope for greater active military participation by Germany, the influence of not simply the history of World War II, but of forty years of the Cold War can only slowly be adapted to meet the demands of the future. As Uwe Nerlich has noted, to a certain extent Europe now has "the Germany it deserves."⁶ The German constitution, civil-military affairs, and society all place limits to varying degrees on the country's use of its armed forces.

The earliest formulation for how the postwar German state would address the issue of military force was laid down in the Constitution (*Grundgesetz*), adopted by West Germany in 1949. The Constitution's influence in this area is twofold. First, it places specific legal constraints on the use of force. Second, it establishes the firm control and oversight of the military by the German Parliament (*Bundestag*) and civilian government, specifically the Chancellor and Minister of Defense.

With regard to legal limitations on military force, the Constitution's Article 26(1) declares that "actions which are undertaken with the intent to disrupt the peaceful coexistence of peoples,

⁶Uwe Nerlich, "L'Allemagne--Un pays comme les autres?" *Politique Étrangère*, Spring 1995, p. 102.

in particular to prepare for the waging of an aggressive war, are unconstitutional.” To the extent the *Bundeswehr* can be used by the government, Article 87a(2) provides that “other than for defense, the armed forces may only be used to the extent this Constitution expressly permits.” These other uses are defined in subsection three of this article as “protection of civilian objects and tasks of traffic regulation in as far as this is necessary to fulfill their defensive mission.” In addition, according to the same subsection, the armed forces can be “transferred to the support of police measures in the case of defense, operating together with the responsible authorities.” Finally, in instances of impending danger, the government can use the armed forces when police units are insufficient to “combat organized and militarily armed insurgents” under the provisions of Article 87a(4).

Such restrictions sufficed and were readily accepted for the forty years of Cold War confrontation. The primary threat Germany faced was from Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces just across the inner-German border. As will be discussed later on, the end of the Cold War and the expansion of NATO planning to include so-called “out of area” missions required a clarification of what exactly the Constitution’s limits were on the defensive use of German forces. In July 1994 the German Constitutional Court issued an opinion which opened the door for Germany to take part in such operations. The basis of the Court’s ruling was Article 24(2) of the Constitution which allows Germany to join a “system of collective security.” Under this provision, the German armed forces are permitted to participate in multilateral military missions. However, the deployment must receive approval by a Parliamentary majority vote taken either before, or

immediately after, the troops are dispatched.⁷

Germany's history influenced the framers of the Constitution not only with regard to the use of the military forces, but also in guaranteeing that control of those forces remains securely in civilian hands. The experience of the Weimar Republic still haunts Germany today and permeates debate on the role of the military in society. In his classic book, *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington analyzes the German military under the Weimar regime as a classic example of a breakdown in civil-military relations. The key image of the Weimar military which is often referred to today is of a "state within the state" (*Staat im Staate*). As Huntington notes, this expression originated in a speech by the head of the Weimar Republic's Army, General von Seeckt, who believed that "the Army should become a State within the State, but it should be merged in the State through service, in fact it should itself become the purest image of the State."⁸

Thus, Germans are not only concerned about the effects a robust army could have on external relations by forming a basis for aggression. They are also fearful of its domestic impact on politics. The metaphor of "state within the state" still recurs in politicians' discourse. Chancellor Kohl has often publicly linked his support for retaining the German system of universal military service to the "state within the state" experience of the Weimar era's professional army. However, the Chancellor quickly adds that this negative experience is not shared by the professional armies of Germany's democratic allies, particularly the United States and Great

⁷Kenneth S. Kilimnik, "Germany's Army After Reunification: The Merging of the Nationale Volksarmee into the Bundeswehr, 1990-1994," *Military Law Review*, Summer 1994, p. 20.

⁸Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 111.

Britain.⁹

The use of the "state within the state" expression has also been extended beyond the military. The charge of becoming a "state within the state" is used against any bureaucracy which is seen by its detractors as eluding the legitimate control of the democratic state, although it is most often related to those which also have some relationship to the use of force. For example, the next most frequent target of this criticism is the German intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND)*, Germany's equivalent to the American Central Intelligence Agency.¹⁰ However, other organizations less militarily oriented have been subjected to the charge of forming a "state within the state." Chancellor Helmut Schmidt recently published an open letter in the influential weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* addressed to the president of the German Central Bank. Schmidt used the "state within the state" metaphor to criticize the Central Bank's hesitation in moving forward with European Monetary Union, a goal endorsed by Germany's political leaders.¹¹

In order to prevent the formation of a "state within the state," the Constitution provides that overall command of the military remains within civilian hands. Interestingly, however, the Constitution is careful to prevent any one civilian leader from exercising too much power over the military instrument. Article 65.a. gives the peacetime responsibility of commanding the German armed forces to the Minister of Defense. Upon the outbreak of war, however, this power changes

⁹ "Kohl spricht sich erneut für die Wehrpflicht aus," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 February 1996.

¹⁰ "Die These; BND auflösen!" *Die Woche*, 23 February 1996, p. 2.

¹¹ Helmut Schmidt, "Die Bundesbank--kein Staat im Staate," *Die Zeit*, 15 November 1996, p. 3.

hands.

In considering the relationship of modern Germany to the use of force, it is important to note that the German Constitution does not provide for a traditional declaration of war. Instead, the outbreak of hostilities is not described as war but rather as the “case of defense” (*Verteidigungsfall*). This phase is declared by a decision of the Parliament and with the approval of the Upper House (*Bundesrat*). Once a “case of defense” is in effect, the Chancellor takes command of the military in accordance with Article 115.b. By this mechanism, no single civilian official can monopolize control over the armed forces.

The fundamental restructuring of the German military also extends to the elimination of traditional pre-1945 institutions such as the General Staff. Just as the General Staff was eliminated, there is technically no longer a German Chief of Staff of the armed forces. Rather, in the demilitarized climate of postwar Germany, the highest ranking officer is given the title Inspector General (*Generalinspekteur*).

Although as the highest-ranking German officer the Inspector General does serve as a public spokesman on military affairs, his room for maneuver is strictly limited. The primacy of political leadership in security affairs over the military (*Primat der Politik*) must always be respected. The former Inspector General, Klaus Naumann, ran into this barrier last December. Naumann was speaking to a contingent of German troops who were departing to assist the NATO peace implementation force (IFOR) in the former Yugoslavia. In describing their new mission, he included the use of the phrase “combat mission” (*Kampfauftrag*). German politicians quickly pounced on the General for using a term which implied a much more active involvement for German forces than the passive support role they had been assigned. Not only was Naumann

castigated by the opposition Social Democrats, but his word choice was also publicly corrected by his civilian boss, Defense Minister Volker Rühe.¹²

Direct and unchallenged civilian control of the *Bundeswehr* represents the top level of German efforts to regulate the use of force. At what might be called the entry level, that of the individual soldier, other methods are employed to civilianize the military institution as much as possible. The elements of this process can be seen in the *Bundeswehr*'s fundamental concept of *Innere Führung*, the rights of soldiers as "citizens in uniform," and efforts to build a sense of tradition for the modern German armed forces.

Although *Innere Führung* can be literally translated as 'internal leadership,' the concept has nuances which are not clearly expressed by its name. Its intent, as described by the Ministry of Defense, is to "equalize the tensions which arise out of the military duties of the soldier and the rights and freedoms of the citizen."¹³ General Gerd Schultze-Rhonhof, recently retired commander of the 1st Armored Division, stated in an interview that one of the principles of *Innere Führung* is "to explain all important decisions and not induce obedience by giving orders."¹⁴ *Innere Führung* is part leadership style and part civic education of the soldier, intended to strengthen his understanding and acceptance of the German civil-military relationship.

An additional characteristic of this relationship is the protection of diverse civil rights

¹²"Generalinspekteur korrigiert. Rühe nennt Wort vom Kampfauftrag Irreführung," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6 December 1995, p. 8.

¹³German Ministry of Defense, "Die Konzeption der Inneren Führung," <http://www.bmvg.government.de>.

¹⁴Gerd Schultze-Rhonhof, "Zehn Monate sind zuwenig," *Focus Magazin*, 12 February 1996, p. 62.

during the soldier's term of service. An additional right exercised by German soldiers is the election of a representative (*Vertrauensmann*) who practices a degree of codetermination with the leadership of the unit. The issues subject to this procedure generally pertain to matters of the soldiers' welfare including transfers, training, and vacations.¹⁵ Soldiers also have the right to petition the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces. Throughout their military service, German troops are thus given positive reinforcement that the protectors of a democratic society do not lose their civil rights while in the *Bundeswehr*.

Finally, there is the difficulty of training German soldiers and instilling a deeper sense of tradition and honor which is consistent with the primacy of civilian control and the non-belligerent culture of modern Germany. This is achieved by emphasizing the complicity of the *Wehrmacht's* leadership, whole units, and individual soldiers in the crimes of the Nazi regime. At the same time as the dark past of the *Wehrmacht* is retold, however, the small group of officers who attempted to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944 are raised up as heroes worthy of emulation. In Defense Minister R  he's words, "next to the Prussian reforms stand in our tradition the men and women of the German resistance against Hitler. The officers of the 20th of July fought bravely and honorably for their country. Their lives stood for the linkage of human dignity, law and conscience to orders and obedience."¹⁶

By combining public references to early 18th Century Prussian heroes and reformers such as Bl  cher, Yorck, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau with the example of the officers who sought to

¹⁵Kilimnik, p. 25.

¹⁶Volker R  he, "Bundeswehr und europ  ische Sicherheit," *Europ  ische Sicherheit*, January 1996, p. 9.

overthrow the Hitler regime, German political leaders seek to instill a vision in the *Bundeswehr* that "military and ethical behavior are compatible."¹⁷ The lesson to be drawn from German history is that military service does not justify complicity in an evil regime. On the contrary, an obligation exists to oppose traditional military order on moral grounds. This, too, is an element of *Innere Führung*. Thus, the modern German army's guiding principle is built on a military tradition which actively encourages its soldiers to question authority and idealizes officers who rebelled against their government.

Significantly, the primary vehicle for the infusion of civilian values into the *Bundeswehr* has traditionally been the system of universal military service. Under the Constitution's Article 12a, men over the age of eighteen can be required to serve in the armed forces, federal border police (*Bundesgrenzschutz*), or civil defense units. An option is provided, however, for those "who on the basis of conscience object to service under arms." Such persons can be obligated to perform an alternative service (*Ersatzdienst*) which may not exceed the length of time required for military service. It should be noted that this provision was not included in the original Constitution, but was added as an amendment in 1956 following the formation of the *Bundeswehr*.¹⁸

Also of note is the fact that compulsory military service is specifically limited by the Constitution to men. Article 12.a.(4) states that women in the armed forces "may in no case perform service under arms." Women are restricted to serving as medical personnel and in the

¹⁷Roman Herzog, "Rede auf der Kommandeurtagung der Bundeswehr," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 16 November 1995.

¹⁸Florian Gerster, "Hat die Wehrpflicht eine Zukunft?" *Europäische Sicherheit*, August 1996, p. 13.

military music corps. They may, however, serve as civilian administrators of the military. The current Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces (*Wehrbeauftragter*), is Claire Marienfeld, the first woman to hold the office. Her duties include providing a mechanism for active duty soldiers to directly petition the government, providing parliamentary oversight, and reporting yearly on the state of the *Bundeswehr* and the condition of its 'citizens in uniform.'

For many Germans, the image of 'the citizen in uniform' as the ultimate defender of his own country is a noble tradition that harkens back to the days of the Prussian reformers such as Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst, Clausewitz's mentor, rebuilt his nation's army along these lines after the small Prussian professional army was crushed by Napoleon's massive force, built on the universal service concept of the *levee en masse*. In more recent times, the Liberal German President Theodor Heuss pronounced his blessing on conscription as the "legitimate child of democracy."¹⁹ This view is countered observers, such as military historian Wolfram Wette, who point out the absence of a systemic link between conscription and democracy, noting "dictatorships make use of it exactly like democracies."²⁰ Nevertheless, universal military service remains a popular remedy for warding off the many ills which Germans worry military forces represent in a democratic society, such as the formation of a "state within the state" mentioned earlier.

The surprising consensus on the acceptability of conscription in Germany is due to its close identification not simply with democratic governance, but also with the most accepted use

¹⁹"Wehrpflicht am Ende?" *Der Spiegel*, 2 August 1993, p. 36.

²⁰Wolfram Wette, "Die Demokratie braucht keine Wehrpflicht," *Die Woche*, 26 July 1996, p. 6.

of military force, that being the defense of national territory, strictly defined. The current Inspector General of the *Bundeswehr*, General Hartmut Bagger, draws the connection that it is "the State's obligation to protect its citizens which legitimizes the *Bundeswehr*."²¹ In a sense fortunately for Germany, the Cold War combined Germany's territorial defense with NATO's most pressing security concern. When other issues arose, such as the need for new weapon systems to maintain nuclear deterrence, heated debates and intense protests erupted in Germany.

With the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the threat of a Soviet-led invasion, Germany might be content to turn its attention away from security issues toward more pressing concerns such as the economic reconstruction of the five new states in eastern Germany. This is certainly a task more daunting than the rapid unification achieved in 1989-90. However, radical changes in the rest of Europe did not stop with the unification of Germany. Having thus far focused on the internal factors which have shaped Germany's perception of the role of force as an instrument of national policy, the effects of external institutions and events must be considered.

External Influences on German Concepts of Force

The restraints placed on the use of force by Germany mentioned previously are deeply rooted in particular aspects of history which have understandably chastened the Germans against taking a more active stance in military affairs since the defeat of the Nazis in World War II. However, this internal reluctance has been offset by other external pressures which have compelled Germany to adapt its view of the role of force. Germany has accepted new roles for its

²¹Hartmut Bagger, "Die Streitkräfte der Zukunft--Anspruch und Realität," *Europäische Sicherheit*, April 1996, p. 11.

military forces as required by outside events or institutions, but has not actively sought to expand its own national profile.

The earliest example is found in the creation of the *Bundeswehr* itself in 1955. German rearmament became a reality, but not because the Germans were clamoring for a restoration of their military power. Rather, the impulse was external, beginning with America's suggestion to a still hesitant Western Europe that Germany be rearmed to help carry the burden of defending NATO against the Red Army. Under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Germany accepted the need to build up a West German army, despite the fact that in so doing, the prospects for ultimately reuniting East and West Germany were thereby diminished.²²

NATO performed two important functions which made Germany's rearmament palatable to its Western neighbors and to the Germans themselves. The first function was providing a clear US commitment to involvement in Europe. With the inclusion of the American superpower, a rearmed Germany cast a comparatively smaller shadow over Europe. Germany's neighbors, still recovering from the recent war's destruction, could take comfort that America's presence in NATO would not leave them to stand alone with a resurrected German military next door. This function is often summarized in the expression that NATO served three purposes, "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."²³

The Alliance's second challenge was to find a way to achieve the calming effect of keeping the Germans "down" while at the same time allowing them to contribute effectively to the defense

²²Anton DePorte, *Europe Between the Superpowers*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 161.

²³"A New Kind of Alliance?" *The Economist*, 1 June 1996, p. 19.

of their own territory as part of NATO. This goal was accomplished by the unprecedented integration of the *Bundeswehr* into the Alliance's military structure. Throughout the Cold War, all German army units were assigned to NATO. German defense planning was therefore conducted not from a purely national perspective, as was the case with other NATO members, but rather wholly within the context of Alliance operations. The extent of the *Bundeswehr*'s integration into the NATO structure became an important and tangible symbol of Germany's overall commitment to the Alliance.

The end of the Cold War and the unification of Germany forced certain changes upon the military organization of NATO and the integration of the *Bundeswehr*. Nevertheless, Germany remained committed to demonstrating its continuing desire to remain a faithful member of the Alliance, reassuring both the US and its European partners that a unified Germany would not seek to pursue a separate national course. As the often divisive issue of nuclear deterrence receded, Germany sought new ways to prove its commitment to the Atlantic Alliance which were far less controversial than providing a forward base for NATO short range nuclear forces. It was aided in this regard by NATO's own quest to adapt itself to the changed European security environment.

The first of many changes NATO faced was the need to replace its traditional "layercake" defense posture which was oriented toward defending an attack across the Central Front in Europe, a line of demarcation which was swept away by German unification.²⁴ As expressed in the Alliance's 1991 Strategic Concept, these single-nation military formations were to be replaced

²⁴Karl Lowe and Thomas Durell Young, "Multinational Corps in NATO," *Survival*, January/February 1991, p. 67.

by multinational forces.²⁵ Multinational forces in the new NATO design would be army corps-sized formations to which typically two nations would contribute division-sized units. Germany quickly seized this Alliance concept of multinationality as “a significant element of solidarity with the Allies in the framework of sharing responsibility, burdens, and risks.”²⁶

The diagram attached as Appendix A illustrates the extent to which Germany has adapted its own military forces to reflect NATO's multinational posture. Germany has assigned its ground forces to a total of seven army corps. Of these, only the IV Corps based in Potsdam in the former East Germany is made up exclusively of German troops. This was necessary as a result of agreements with the USSR prohibiting the extension of NATO forces into eastern Germany, a concession made to gain Soviet approval for German unification. Even so, in times of crisis mandating a change in NATO's alert status, the IV Corps would reportedly be assigned to NATO.²⁷

The remaining corps include both German forces and other NATO troops, although some explanation may be necessary to decode the actual membership which is hidden by military symbology and acronyms. American and German forces form two corps, based in Ulm and Heidelberg. LANDJUT is the acronym given to the German-Danish corps based in Rendeburg. The ARRC is the Allied Forces Central Europe Rapid Reaction Corps. The last two corps are the German-Dutch corps in Muenster and the EuroCorps, with its headquarters in Strasbourg,

²⁵"The Alliance's New Strategic Concept," *NATO Review*, December 1991, p. 32.

²⁶German Ministry of Defense, "In die Sicherheitspolitik: Multinationalität," <http://www.bmvg.government.de/multinat.htm>, 3 November 1996, p. 3.

²⁷Christian Müller, "Nato-Zuteilung der Bundeswehr bis zur Oder," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 3 February 1995, p. 1.

France. The latter incorporates French, German, Belgian, Spanish, and Luxemburgish units.

This multinational arrangement not only places certain distinct limitations on Germany's ability to use force, but also has important political and diplomatic effects. The limiting effect is seen in the fact that Germany has only one purely national corps available. Germany's commitment to a multinational posture is intended to continue the identification of German forces with NATO defense and not with the use of force for purely national objectives.

Politically and diplomatically, the multinational concept provides a new basis for the continued presence of foreign troops on German soil after unification. With the passing of the Cold War confrontation which centered on Germany, NATO forces could have been expected to withdraw back to their countries of origin. Germany has traded its ability to use its own forces independently, a right it was not eager to avail itself of, for the benefit of demonstrating its commitment to continued NATO involvement, reassuring the Allies that Germany is not going to chart a separate course.

The German preference for exchanging national independence for influence in international structures is reflected in a recent article by German Lieutenant Colonels Erich Vad and Manfred Meyers. The two officers, staff planners in the German Ministry of Defense, described Germany as "the leader in multinationality, out of national security-policy interest." Rather than emphasizing the restraints of multinationalization, they argue that the process actually helps in "securing the necessary measure of German sovereignty and influence in the community of democratic states."²⁸

²⁸Erich Vad and Manfred Meyers, "Multinationalität der Streitkräfte," *Europäische Sicherheit*, September 1996, p. 34.

A second NATO policy which Germany has adopted with vigor is the division of national armed forces into three specific categories, first proposed in the Alliance's 1990 London Declaration. The first category consists of Main Defense Forces which are the traditionally oriented types of combat units which NATO maintained during the Cold War for the purpose of territorial defense. The second category is Reaction Forces, designed to be more mobile and able to respond on shorter notice for duty in a crisis as needed. The final grouping consists of Augmentation Forces, which are the necessary reserve elements needed to bring NATO up to full fighting strength in the event of a major confrontation.²⁹

Accordingly, the German Ministry of Defense has undertaken its own restructuring of the German armed forces which faithfully mirrors the NATO program. The active duty *Bundeswehr* will now divide its 340,000 men into the two categories of Main Defense Forces (*Hauptverteidigungskräfte, HVK*) and Crisis Reaction Forces (*Krisenreaktionskräfte, KRK*). The NATO category of Augmentation Forces will be provided by the system of requiring compulsory military service. *Bundeswehr* conscripts, who are released after serving their mandatory tour, provide Germany with the necessary reserves to rapidly double the size of the *Bundeswehr* to 670,000 men after mobilization.³⁰

The creation of this new structure has focused most of the public's attention on the composition and role of the Crisis Reaction Forces. In comparison to the overall size of the *Bundeswehr*, the German Crisis Reaction Forces are relatively small. Current plans call for

²⁹*Ibid*, p. 33.

³⁰Andrew B. Denison, "The Future of the German Conscript System--Are its Days Numbered?" *Comparative Strategy*, July-September 1996, p. 277.

37,000 soldiers from the Army, 12,000 men of the Air Force, and 4,300 sailors from the Navy.³¹ However, it is not the size but the prospective mission of these forces which have caused political controversy in Germany. The circumstances under which the Crisis Reaction Forces would be deployed are a direct consequence of the third major NATO policy adaptation of the post-Cold War era.

That third development originated at the June 1992 NATO Ministerial Meeting in Oslo. For the first time, the Allies officially offered to make NATO forces available to the United Nations or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later OSCE) for peacekeeping missions on a case-by-case basis.³² By virtue of their equipment, training, and mobility, the Crisis Reaction Forces will likely be the best suited units for such missions. However, NATO still lacked a flexible structure which made it possible to combine forces from a variety of nations on an ad hoc basis to meet the needs of individual crises. Such a plan was approved four years later when the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) concept received the endorsement of NATO foreign ministers meeting in Berlin in June 1996.³³

The CJTF concept has been hailed as a milestone in NATO's quest to cast off its image as a relic of the Cold War and free itself from its previously restrictive focus on territorial defense along a now non-existent Central Front. For Germany, however, the development of the CJTF concept represents a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the Berlin agreements ensured that NATO

³¹German Ministry of Defense, "Anpassung der Streitkrätestrukturen, der Territorialen Wehrverwaltung und der Stationierung," <http://www.bmvg.government.de>, 7 June 1995, p. 6.

³²"Kommuniqué der Ministertagung des Nordatlantikrates," *Bulletin*, Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 12 June 1992, p. 615.

³³"A New Kind of Alliance?" p. 19.

would remain an important institution in European affairs, keeping the Americans engaged and Europeans reassured about Germany's linkage to the West.

On the other hand, the shift in NATO's attention away from the territorial mission represented movement away from the role of military force which enjoyed the greatest degree of legitimacy in the eyes of most Germans. Out of area operations under the CJTF framework stand to be considerably more controversial. German reactions to NATO's expanded role can be seen in the debate which arose concerning the prototype for CJTF operations, the Bosnian peacekeeping mission organized under IFOR.

The Diversity of Political Opinion

Germany is a very 'normal' country in at least one respect concerning the role of force. The prospect of committing German troops to international operations is consistently the subject of intense debate among the major political parties and is often colored by domestic power struggles, just as in other Western democracies. The fundamental difference, however, is that in the German case the debate generally focuses not on the question of whether a particular use of the armed forces is consistent with national interests, but rather whether the use of the military instrument is even legitimate in the first place. Clausewitz' classic description of war as "policy by other means" could never be uttered in public by any current German politician who hoped to remain in office.³⁴

The broad spectrum of opinion on the use of force will therefore be analyzed by an

³⁴Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by Peter Paret and Michael Howard, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 87.

examination of the positions taken by the major political parties. At present, Germany is governed by a center-right coalition consisting of the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and more liberal Free Democrats (FDP) who have generally been supportive, if hesitant, to contribute German troops to the IFOR mission. The two major opposition parties, the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens, have radically different positions with regard to the role of force in German politics and will be considered as an alternate model.

Although initially hesitant to get involved in a Balkan peacekeeping force for historical reasons, the governing coalition has generally supported the gradual expansion in the roles and missions of the *Bundeswehr*. As early as December 1992, Defense Minister Volker Rühe gave a speech to the *Bundeswehr*'s Leadership Academy in which he defined the missions of the German armed forces to be as follows:

- protect Germany and its citizens against political extortion and external danger
- support the military stability and integration of Europe
- defend Germany and its allies,
- serve world peace and international security in accordance with the UN Charter
- help in catastrophes and emergencies
- support humanitarian actions.³⁵

The first official deployment of the *Bundeswehr* outside the strict confines of German territory actually predated Rühe's speech by several years. In 1987 the German government dispatched naval units to the Mediterranean Sea, replacing Allied warships sent to patrol the Persian Gulf region.³⁶ In 1992 the *Bundeswehr* provided 150 medical personnel to a UN sponsored hospital in Cambodia. This was followed by the deployment of 1700 soldiers to

³⁵Volker Rühe, *Betr: Bundeswehr*, (Berlin: Verlag E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1993), p. 111.

³⁶Karl-Heinz Kamp, "Die Debatte um den Einsatz deutscher Streitkräfte ausserhalb des Buendnisgebietes," *Interne Studie 22/1991*, March 1991, p. 16.

Somalia as medical support to an Indian UN brigade which never arrived. What is significant about the latter mission is that it included a small company of *Bundeswehr* paratroopers to provide protection for the German medical personnel.³⁷

Despite this gradual expansion of the German military's role, the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl was initially very reluctant to become involved in the Balkans beyond offering support enforcing the embargo of Yugoslavia. Publicly, the Chancellor and other German politicians argued that the *Bundeswehr* should not be sent into any region in Europe formerly occupied by the *Wehrmacht* in World War II.³⁸ While Germany might have preferred to have avoided entanglement in the Bosnian peacekeeping mission, the government could not allow its hesitation to contradict assurances that Germany would take an equal share of the burdens and responsibilities in the reformed Atlantic Alliance. However, rather than actively volunteering the services of the *Bundeswehr*, the Kohl administration waited for NATO to formally request German support for the IFOR mission.³⁹

Just as the current government cautiously, but steadily advocated that Germany bear its fair share of the risks and burdens associated with a modern nation's typical international responsibilities, it is also taking steps to take responsibility for the safety of its own citizens abroad. Germany's deficit in this area was demonstrated in 1994 when eleven employees of *Deutsche Welle*, the German international broadcasting service, were trapped in their relay station

³⁷Johannes Dieterich, "Exerzierplatz Bosnien," *Die Woche*, 27 September 1996, p. 34.

³⁸Günter Verheugen, "Kohls gefährlicher Sonderweg," *Focus Magazin*, 25 February 1995, p. 24.

³⁹"Überlegungen zur Beteiligung an einer Friedenstruppe," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5 October 1995, p. 10.

near Kigali, Rwanda. A similar incident in 1977 was resolved when a special unit of the federal border police known as the *GSG-9* rescued hostages from a Lufthansa airliner on the ground in Mogadishu, Somalia. This time however, no German military units were available to perform a rescue. Belgian paratroopers were dispatched to rescue the German crew instead. Although government officials expressed sincere appreciation for their fellow Europeans' assistance in this dangerous instance, they were equally determined not to be put in such a situation again.⁴⁰

Under Defense Minister R  he's leadership, the *Bundeswehr* has since begun development of a new component within the Crisis Reaction Forces which will provide Germany with a military capability in this unique area. By the year 2000, a thousand-man force of elite commandos will form the German equivalent of America's Special Forces. The German unit is officially titled the Special Forces Command (*Kommando Spezialkraefte, KRK*) and will be responsible for hostage rescue and emergency evacuation of German citizens in danger abroad.

Because of its mission, this new force may be the first *Bundeswehr* unit to engage in actual combat operations. This would represent a significant new expansion of the German government's willingness to use armed forces in several respects. First, and most obviously, an armed rescue mission would exceed the heretofore limited role of the armed forces in UN and NATO peacekeeping missions. Second, although support might be drawn from NATO, such a mission would be largely an exclusive operation of the *Bundeswehr*, departing from the traditional avoidance of using the armed forces in a purely national context. Third, the requirement for extremely rapid deployment to the crisis area could require that the operation be conducted before

⁴⁰"Lehre aus der Geiselnahme von elf Deutschen in Ruanda," *S  ddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 January 1996, p. 50.

Parliamentary approval is received. As the Munich based newspaper, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, observed “hostage takers don’t confine themselves to weeks when the *Bundestag* is in session.”⁴¹

Persistent opposition to the Kohl government’s gradual expansion of the *Bundeswehr*’s international profile has come from two parties on the German Left, the Social Democrats and the Greens. The Social Democrats have a long tradition of providing an alternative model for German foreign and security policy. In the 1960s and 70s, the SPD under Chancellor Willy Brandt made the term *Ostpolitik* common in international discourse. Throughout the 1980s, the Social Democrats championed the cause of disarmament and dialogue with the East, developing their own unique security policy proposals including the concept of defensive defense.

In the 1990s, the SPD has grown to accept NATO’s continued presence on the European security scene. Centrist SPD members, like security expert Karsten Voigt, have supported the Atlantic Alliance’s evolution into an “anchor of stability” and are open to the eastward expansion of NATO.⁴² Nevertheless, the Social Democrats have been split over the issue of how active German troops should be in military actions under NATO auspices. It was, after all, the SPD’s opposition to the German Cabinet’s decision to deploy troops to assist in the enforcement of the UN embargo against Serbia and to serve as part of the UN force in Somalia which precipitated the Constitutional Court’s ruling on “out of area” missions.⁴³

However, the extent of the division in the Social Democratic ranks regarding the future

⁴¹Christoph Schwennicke, “Ruhe’s Jungs für alle Fälle,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, p.3

⁴²Karsten D. Voigt, “Die NATO als Stabilitätsanker,” *Europäische Sicherheit*, August 1996, p. 6.

⁴³Kilimnik, p. 20.

missions of the *Bundeswehr* became apparent in the summer of 1995. The government submitted plans to deploy German electronic combat aircraft to Italy with authorization to fly missions over the former Yugoslavia in support of UN peacekeeping forces. After heated discussion in the *Bundestag*, 40 SPD members voted with the government in favor of the deployment.⁴⁴

Later in the year, as Germany prepared to join the NATO-led Implementation Force overseeing the Dayton Accord, the issue flared up again and became the subject of a power struggle among the SPD leadership. A Social Democratic panel, headed by deputy party chief Oskar Lafontaine, drafted a petition approving the Bundeswehr's participation in IFOR, but added a line excluding the deployment of the disputed electronic combat variants of the Tornado aircraft. This addition was opposed by prominent SPD foreign policy specialists including Karsten Voigt and Norbert Gansel as well as then-SPD party boss Rudolf Scharping.⁴⁵

Lafontaine used the Tornado deployment issue to polarize the SPD and undercut Scharping's leadership. At the party's national conference in Mannheim in November 1995, Lafontaine delivered a rousing foreign policy speech and swept control of the party away from Scharping, emerging as the SPD's new party chief. In his closing speech of the conference, Lafontaine declared the SPD to be once again a "party of the Left."⁴⁶

With regard to the SPD's official posture on the role of force in German foreign policy,

⁴⁴Christian Müller, "Bonner Kabinettsbeschluss zum Bosnieninsatz," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 29 November 1995, p. 3.

⁴⁵"Scharping auf dem SPD-Parteitag brüskiert," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 16 November 1996, p. 1.

⁴⁶"Die SPD nun wieder eine »Linkspartei«,," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 18 November 1995, p. 3.

Lafontaine's victory is likely to mark a shift away from moderates like Voigt and toward the party's Left wing, represented by Günter Verheugen. While Verheugen does not call into question NATO's role in European security, he does posit a distinctly different model for Germany's participation. In an article last Spring, he declared: "Germany cannot forget its historical lessons. Help the UN with blue helmets? Unquestionably 'yes,' and more so than has been done in the past. Establish crisis reaction forces for conventional wars beyond territorial defense? An equally resounding 'no.' A permanently available German UN contingent with extensive peacekeeping training would be an important signal."⁴⁷ Verheugen's remarks again emphasize the general acceptance of peacekeeping and territorial defense as legitimate roles for Germany's national armed forces as well as the emphatic opposition to any mission which exceeds those limited objectives.

Like the SPD, the other significant Leftist German party, the Greens, have been deeply divided over the issue of Germany's involvement in out of area peacekeeping missions. However, the debate among the Greens has struck deeper at the party's heart because of its fundamentally pacifist roots. The Green party came to political power with the support of the radical German environmental and peace movements in the 1970s and 1980s. Success in national elections has confronted members of the Green party with the difficult choice of whether to remain a purely opposition movement, or pragmatically accept the responsibility of governing in coalition with the other major political parties. Members who fall into the former camp are called Fundamentalists (*Fundis*), whereas the latter are labelled realists (*Realos*). In foreign policy, the Fundamentalists are the most vocal advocates of rigid adherence to pacifist standards opposing any use of armed

⁴⁷Günter Verheugen, "Gigantische Irreführung," *Die Woche*, 21 April 1995, p. 6.

force.

However, this idealistic position was seriously challenged when the extent of the brutality experienced by civilians in the Yugoslav conflict became apparent. Realist Greens began to rethink the party's principled blanket opposition to the use of military force. Amazingly, they also took issue with the initial arguments put forward by the Kohl government and the Social Democrats that Germany's World War II experience in the Balkans precluded the *Bundeswehr*'s participation in UN peacekeeping in that particular region.

Relatively early in the German debate, Conny Jürgens, parliamentary secretary for the Greens in the city-state of Hamburg declared, "precisely because of their old guilt the Germans have a special obligation to intervene there for human rights." Jürgens summarized the feelings of many Realist Greens in saying "the UN must be in the position more and more to protect human rights and intervene in such conflicts with military means." German participation was imperative not simply for historical reasons but also because, "it would be inconsistent to demand a UN intervention and on the other hand say, we're keeping ourselves out of it."⁴⁸

In December 1995, the Green Party managed to muster sufficient support from both Fundamentalist and Realist factions to approve the adoption of a statement on the "Guiding Thoughts for a Civilianizing of Foreign Policy" (*Leitgedanken für eine Zivilisierung der Aussenpolitik*) which summarized the party's consensus on the limited legitimate role of force in international relations. The party declared: "We respect the right of peoples to defend themselves with the means they deem necessary against external aggressors or to oppose dictators in their own land. . . . As a political organization, however, it is our mission to develop sound

⁴⁸ "Sie kneifen, Herr General," *Der Spiegel*, 1 February 1993, p. 77.

alternatives to military conflict resolution.”⁴⁹ As advocates of a “civilianized foreign policy,” the Greens naturally oppose efforts to “militarize” the European Union by expanding the role of the Western European Union (WEU). Such efforts at either the national or the European level are generally denounced as an illegitimate return to traditional power politics (*Machtpolitik*).⁵⁰

The Greens are also surprisingly unique among the major German political parties in their opposition to conscription. Despite their differences over the use of the *Bundeswehr* out of area, both the conservative governing coalition of Christian and Free Democrats and the leftist opposition Social Democrats support the continuation of the system of universal military service. The Greens, in stark contrast, actually support the transformation of the *Bundeswehr* into an all-professional army, but with important conditions attached. This position is described by the Greens’ defense policy spokeswoman, Angelika Beer, as follows: “Our long term planning is for the de-militarization of nation-states, that also includes getting rid of the *Bundeswehr*. . . Along with the elimination of conscription, we want to reduce the *Bundeswehr* to a purely defensive army of 100,000 men as a transition on to zero. Simultaneously we want to set up a peace corps under the authority of the Foreign Ministry and made available to the OSCE.”⁵¹

Although their numbers have grown considerably since the party’s early beginnings as an anti-Establishment ecological movement, the Greens remain a small party on the national scale and are extremely unlikely to enter into a national government as the majority partner in a

⁴⁹Angelika Beer, “Antimilitärisches Verständnis der Grünen,” *Europäische Sicherheit*, April 1996, p. 6.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹*Ibid.*

coalition. Given that fact, the prevailing political consensus among the other major parties in support of the conscript system as the basis for the *Bundeswehr* is likely to remain secure. Despite this consensus, however, there are significant trends which are making it increasingly unlikely that the conscription system can be maintained in its present form.

Forces for Change

Germany's continued adherence to conscription will be challenged in the near future by the military and political requirements for maintaining the Crisis Reaction Forces, exploitation of the Constitutionally protected alternative service option, and further reductions in the *Bundeswehr*'s overall strength. Taken together with external pressure for Germany to make additional contributions to international military operations, these internal factors will increase pressure to professionalize the German military altogether. If the *Bundeswehr* becomes an all-professional service, the armed forces risk losing their legitimizing association with the widely accepted mission of national territorial defense. Instead, the German army may become stigmatized as a force oriented toward unpopular external armed intervention.

Although the formation of a Crisis Reaction Force within the existing *Bundeswehr* is a positive development in helping Germany make contributions to NATO peacekeeping forces, it is not without its adverse effects within the armed forces as a whole. In an era of declining defense budgets, the funding available for new equipment and specialized training becomes even more scarce. In order to bring the military units designated as Crisis Reaction Forces into service as quickly as possible, those components of the *Bundeswehr* will have to be given priority in the allocation of available resources. The danger is that the preference shown the Crisis Reaction

Forces will lead to the creation of a "Two Class Army," elevating the elite professional forces above the conscript-dominated Main Defense Forces.⁵²

The resulting potential decline in morale among the conscript force would lead in turn to a increase in the number of young men who evade military service by exploiting the Constitutional right to choose an alternative for reasons of conscience. An additional factor contributing to the abuse of the alternative service provision is that, while the number of months served may be equivalent to military duty, the conditions of alternative civilian service can be much more favorable. Civilian service positions are often located close to the young man's hometown, thereby reducing the need to move, an important factor in a society which is considerably less mobile than America's. Physical danger and hardship are not likely to be encountered in the civilian sphere, nor are long hours of guard duty or weekend service required.

At present the percentage of young men refusing to serve in the army has increased to 32 percent. In France, by contrast, the figure is seven percent.⁵³ The morale of those doing military service may further decline should they perceive themselves to be "fools" for not having found a more clever way of escaping conscription.⁵⁴ If the more peacefully inclined citizens flock to alternative service, one of the main arguments against professionalization of the military is undermined. In effect, by not choosing to exercise the alternative service option, conscripts which choose to serve their tour in the *Bundeswehr* are already self-selecting themselves based on a

⁵²Christian Müller, "Deutschland: Weiterer Abbau der deutschen Bundeswehr," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 16 March 1995, p. 15.

⁵³Theo Sommer, "Zeit zum letzten Zapfenstreich?" *Die Zeit*, 8 March 1996, p. 1.

⁵⁴Roman Herzog, "Verteidigung der Freiheit," *Europäische Sicherheit*, July 1996, p. 12.

desire to enter the military. This is the same pool of young men who would likely be attracted to service in a professional military. Therefore, the argument that conscription prevents the military's ranks from being drawn from a single "social milieu" seems to ring hollow.⁵⁵ In the meantime, the German social system itself has become dependent on the support provided by 100,000 young men each year.

Finally, as the emphasis within the *Bundeswehr*'s training and mission shifts increasingly toward out of area operations involving the Crisis Reaction Forces, and as long as Russia does not revert to an aggressive military posture, the compelling need for the large number of soldiers a conscript army provides will diminish. Deeper cuts in the *Bundeswehr*'s overall strength would save money, to be sure. However, further reductions would also call into question the continued need for universal military service. Conscription would be seen as only providing too many soldiers for an unlikely, though wholly legitimate, mission. Too many conscripts for too few positions in the *Bundeswehr* would lead to a situation in which some eligible recruits are turned away while others are compelled to serve, violating the accepted principle of fairness (*Wehrgerechtigkeit*).⁵⁶

Acting together over time these trends can intensify the arguments in favor of fully professionalizing the *Bundeswehr*. Although a professional German army has been publicly decried by politicians on the Right and the Left as opening the door once again to the creation of a "state within the state" as in the days of the Weimar republic, such concerns are likely

⁵⁵Sommer, p. 1.

⁵⁶Martin E. Sueskind, "Wieviel Geld braucht die Armee?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 July 1996, p. 4.

unfounded. The critical question at the heart of the inevitable debate on the future of conscription is not really whether a professional German military can be trusted to remain loyal to the modern democratic state. Rather, the focus is on the civilian side of the civil-military relationship in Germany today. At issue is whether or not Germans trust their political leaders to make decisions regarding the use of the military instrument as one of the legitimate components of national policy.

The primary concern is that a professional army might be more readily sent into action abroad than a force which includes conscripts. Might not German political leaders be more willing to risk the lives of well-trained, paid professionals than those of the young men in a conscript-based *Bundeswehr* which the German public sees emotionally as "the army of our sons?"⁵⁷ As journalist Theo Sommer summarized in his article defending continued compulsory military service, "as long as we have conscription, the threshold of hesitation is very high in the Parliament. Doing away with conscription could remove the inhibitions from policy."⁵⁸ German voters who support the current center-right government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl might feel comfortable with the notion of a professional army in this context. However, it is most unlikely the Leftist members of the SPD or the Greens would favor a professional *Bundeswehr* actively engaged in NATO military operations.

⁵⁷Günter Roth, "Die Bundeswehr vor ihrer tiefgreifendsten Zäsur," *Europäische Sicherheit*, February, 1996, p. 11.

⁵⁸Sommer, p. 1.

Impact on European and American Relations

Finally, this analysis will consider the impact Germany's gradually expanding ability to use the *Bundeswehr* in multinational operations will have on relations with America and the European Union (EU). The impact on German-American relations has been and will likely continue to be modest, and thus will be considered last. Of greater interest is the effect on Germany's relationship with the European Union.

Despite the progress Germany has made in preparing the *Bundeswehr* for out of area operations, the limits placed on Germany's use of force resulting from continued adherence to the conscript system will hamper European efforts to establish military institutions for missions independent of the United States. A case in point is the five-nation EuroCorps, which was originally established as a potential model for a future joint European army. The original missions established for the EuroCorps reveal the influence of German military minimalism. In brief, the EuroCorps was conceived to serve as a main defense force available for use under Article 5 of the Washington or Brussels treaties (the respective self-defense provisions of the NATO and WEU agreements), for the preservation or re-establishment of peace, and "humanitarian" actions.⁵⁹ These missions are not the most likely challenges facing Europe, but rather represent those uses of armed force which traditionally have the greatest legitimacy within Germany.

French leaders recently suggested that the EuroCorps might serve as a follow-on force in Bosnia after IFOR's mandate expires. However, this proposal was quickly dismissed by Germany's Defense Minister who pointed out that a large portion of the German forces in the

⁵⁹Joint Press Conference of the French President, François Mitterand, and the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, at the Conclusion of the 59th German-French Consultations in La Rochelle on 22 May 1991 (Excerpts), *Europa Archiv*, 10 July 1991, p. 455.

EuroCorps is not exclusively staffed by professionals, but includes significant numbers of conscript soldiers who cannot be deployed for duty in Bosnia.⁶⁰ The SPD's security expert, Karsten Voigt, suggested yet another constraint when he stated that the EuroCorps can only be deployed in situations where its French and German component forces are given the same mission.⁶¹

This restriction could frustrate the ambitious hopes of the French or other Europeans who look to the EuroCorps as a symbol of the European Union's ability to project power independent of the United States. Given continued German resistance to the use of the *Bundeswehr* for combat missions (*Kampfaufträge*), the EuroCorps' level of engagement in any out of area operation would be reduced to more benign peacekeeping functions. This would be in stark contrast to France's experience in using its armed forces in a more active role. In this author's assessment, combining German and French units within the framework of the EuroCorps can be compared to trying to accomplish a task with two radically different breeds of dogs, one a Saint Bernard and the other a Doberman.

Despite the fact that Germany is the largest EU member nation in terms of population (82 million, or 22% of the EU total), has the highest share of the Union's Gross Domestic Product (28%, compared to second-place France with 18%), and has an army second in size only to France (by only 10,000 after French professionalization) it still lacks the ability and will to contribute military resources on the same scale as other great powers such as France and Great

⁶⁰Christian Müller, "Deutscher Beitrag an die neue Bosnien-Truppe," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 7 October 1995, p. 3.

⁶¹Michael Jach, "Bosnien-Einsatz; bittere Erkenntnis," *Focus Magazin*, 1 April 1996, p. 48.

Britain.⁶² Although this fact may detract from grander designs for the creation of a European superpower, Germany's limited role may be nonetheless be somewhat reassuring to other European Union members as it prevents German domination of European institutions across the board.

At present, a sense of balance exists between the relative strengths of the two major leading nations within the EU, Germany and France. Germany is the unquestioned economic giant, as the aforementioned statistics indicate. However, France compensates by maintaining a full spectrum of military capabilities, including nuclear weapons, backed with the political will to use armed force when necessary. French analyst, Dominique Moisi, puts the comparison more elegantly by saying, "France has the *force de frappe*, Germany has the *Bundesbank*."⁶³

One final question one might ask with regard to the European Union is whether participation in its multinational institutions, such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), can serve as another external factor in increasing Germany's acceptance of a broader role for the *Bundeswehr* in a manner analogous to that attributed to NATO. Presenting Germany with the opportunity to integrate its armed forces into multinational European units like the EuroCorps may help to diffuse the national character of German armed forces, disassociating them from the negative connotations of German history.

However, this option will only appeal to moderate or conservative Germans who are already positively disposed toward the use of military force. The German Left will continue to

⁶²"Too Big for Its Boots?: Survey of Germany," *The Economist*, 9 November 1996, p. 20.

⁶³Cited in Nerlich, "Un pays comme les autres," p. 103.

oppose military solutions to foreign and security policy challenges as a matter of basic principle. They are likely to oppose the militarization of policy within EU circles with the same fervor they oppose such approaches in domestic German politics.

Finally, what can the United States expect as Germany restructures its armed forces and expands its Crisis Reaction Forces? America has long urged its European Allies, including Germany, to take on a greater share of the security burden both in Europe and other critical regions around the world. To the extent future operations require military forces for humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, or some limited form of preventive crisis management, the United States will likely find Germany increasingly willing to take an active role.

However, Germany will not in the foreseeable future find the use of military force to be as acceptable in as broad a range of situations as the United States does. The Germans will still be reluctant to partake in missions where the likelihood of open armed conflict is extremely high. Simply put, unless some powerful nation directly threatens the physical security or political integrity of the United States by military means, Germany is unlikely to go into combat in defense of mutual interests. Peacekeeping, war prevention, and crisis management will be preferred uses of joint German-American force. A future US-German partnership, to the extent one exists outside the European Union framework, will more closely resemble the dedicated, but low-key cooperation between the US and a moderate, internationalist Canadian government, than the intensely martial spirit of the US-British relationship in the Reagan-Thatcher era.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this analysis has shown that despite considerable progress in recent years, Germany is still far from being considered a normal country with regard to the use of force. Germany's reluctance to view the *Bundeswehr* as a legitimate "political instrument," in Clausewitz's terms, is understandably linked to the sinister history of the *Wehrmacht* which formed the Nazi military machine. The German constitution codified specific legal restraints on the state's ability to use force and established a system of strong civilian control over the military.

Germany's membership in the NATO alliance made its rearmament possible in 1955 and further shaped German conceptions about the acceptable uses of its own national military power. With the end of the Cold War, NATO's evolution has prodded Germany to expand its use of the *Bundeswehr* beyond the Alliance's traditional territorial boundaries. The restructuring of the German armed forces provides the nation with potentially controversial new military capabilities while at the same time calling into question the system of universal military service supported by the vast majority of Germans.

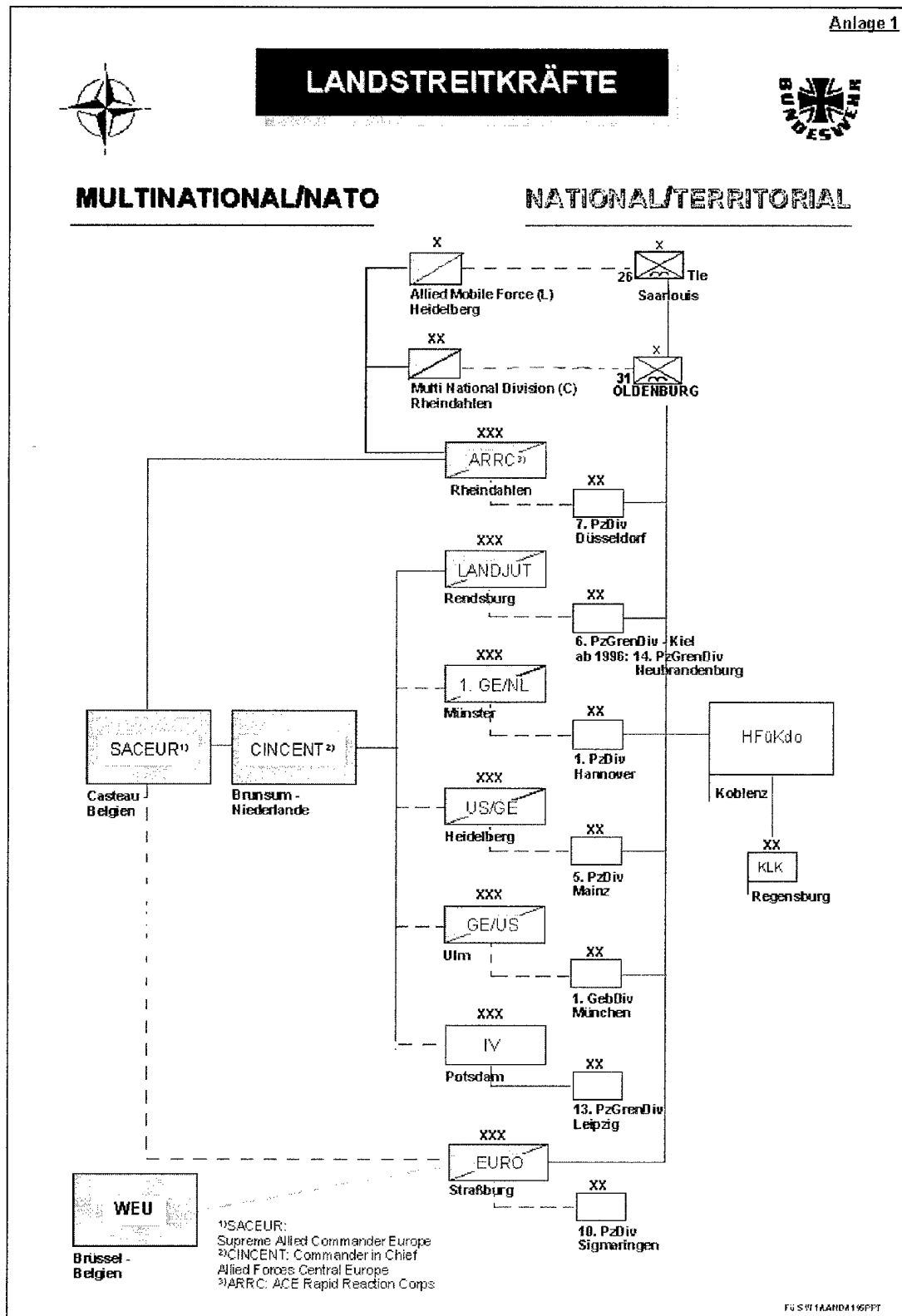
Nevertheless, Germany has significantly expanded its view of the legitimate uses of military force. Although Germany's fellow members of the European Union may welcome Germany's increased willingness to share the risks and burdens of joint military operations, they are most comfortable with a modest German profile in security affairs, lest Germany be seen as dominating all aspects of EU policy.

With regard to America, Germany's evolution should be welcomed and encouraged, but not overestimated. Germany will remain a loyal ally and partner of the United States and contribute more frequently to NATO missions, including those which are out of area. However,

Germany is far from becoming as 'normal' in the use of force to the same degree as America, an extremely independent-minded country and the last remaining superpower.

Appendix A

German Land Forces Integration



Source: German Ministry of Defense, BMVg OnLine, <http://www.bmvg.government.de>

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MALD PAPER

CHANCELLOR HELMUT KOHL AND GERMAN UNIFICATION

A "NEW" NATION AND A "NEW" STATESMAN

SUBMITTED TO PROFESSOR LORD

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Introduction

Viewed from the safe distance of eight years, the unification of Germany in 1989-90 may appear to have been inevitable. Given the state of economic decay of the Soviet Union and its Eastern satellites, dramatic reform and an end to the Cold War confrontation were the only rational options. As the clearest symbol of the Cold War and Europe's division, the separation of Germany into two opposing states was also bound to be swept away by the march of history.

However, such a simplistic view neglects the pressures which were acting against the formal unification of the two German states within a short time frame. Rapid German unity could have been sacrificed in order to prevent a backlash in the Soviet Union which would have spelled the end of Mikhail Gorbachev's much-praised efforts at reform. On the domestic side, the extreme cost of achieving unity with East Germany gave even patriotic West Germans second thoughts about the advisability of a rush to unification. Finally, given the dark history of unified Germany in the first half of the 20th Century, there was considerable sentiment against bringing the two states back together.

These many obstacles were overcome by the hard work and dedication of many individuals in Europe and North America during the years of 1989 and 1990, not all of whom were heads of state or even members of government. This paper will focus on the role played by one statesman in particular, however, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Despite being the head of the West German government, prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, Kohl was not his country's preeminent statesman. That distinction was held at the time by his Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

Kohl was transformed into a statesman by the same process which transformed Germany

from two states into one. This transformation took place despite the limitations facing the Chancellor as a leader of a coalition government. It was partly a result of the rapid pace of unification which required frequent personal contact between national leaders often by telephone, outpacing the normal diplomatic procedures which favored Genscher's Foreign Ministry. It was also due to Kohl's ability to rise to the occasion as a leader both in Germany and internationally. By providing an early outline for managing unification and carefully managing the instruments of statecraft available to him, Kohl secured his place in German history as the Chancellor of Unity (*der Kanzler der Einheit*). This paper will conclude with an assessment of Kohl's status as a statesman today in the wake of his declaration as a candidate for reelection to the office of Chancellor in the 1998 elections.

West German Politics Before Unification

Like many other aspects of the West German state formed after the Second World War, the office of the Federal Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler*) was recast to prevent the rise of another Hitler. The German constitution of 1949 separated certain specific functions from the Chancellor's control. In addition to designating the Federal President as the West German state's representative for the purposes of international law, the constitution placed the peacetime control of the military in the hands of the Defense Minister.¹ Only in times of crisis declared by a vote of the German Parliament (*Bundestag*) with approval by the Upper House (*Bundesrat*) does the Chancellor exercise command over the military.

Although the placement of peacetime command of the armed forces in the hands of the

¹See Articles 59.1. and 65.a., respectively.

Defense Minister as a means of limiting the Chancellor's power may seem to be a mere technicality, its significance becomes more apparent when considering the degree of independence with which Cabinet ministers are expected to operate. As defined by the Constitution, the German Chancellor is not an all-powerful Executive. Article 65 establishes the political balance of power as follows:

“The Federal Chancellor determines the guidelines of policy and bears the responsibility for it. Within these guidelines, each Federal Minister directs his area of affairs independently and under his own responsibility. The Federal Government decides on differences of opinion between Federal Ministers. The Federal Chancellor directs their affairs in accordance with rules of procedure agreed upon by the Federal Government and approved by the Federal President.”²

In cases where ministers are members of the Chancellor's own party, their ability to act independently may well fall far short of the ideal expressed in the Constitution, especially if the Chancellor is also the party's leader.

In recent times, however, German governments have been formed by a coalition of one of the major parties, either the conservative Christian Democrats or the left-leaning Social Democrats (SPD), with the much smaller Free Democratic Party (FDP). Although the FDP usually wins no more than 5-10% of the vote nationally, this small percentage has been essential to the major parties in forming a majority government. Thus, the Free Democrats are often able to exercise a degree of influence greater than their diminutive size. By withdrawing their support, the FDP can bring down a Chancellor's government, as was the case in 1982 when the Free Democrats abandoned the government of Social Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

However, for the purposes of this analysis of statecraft, it is more interesting to note the

²The term “Federal Government” is defined by Article 62 as consisting of the Chancellor and the Federal Ministers.

impact of the coalition system on the conduct of foreign policy. As part of the coalition bargain, the Free Democrats have traditionally been given control of the German Foreign Ministry. In the United States, this would be as if President Clinton were obliged to offer Ross Perot the post of Secretary of State and allow his party to staff the upper echelons of the State Department.

Not only does this arrangement separate the Chancellor from the operational conduct of foreign affairs, it can also serve to create a competing center of power within Germany regarding the exercise of statecraft. As will be discussed in greater detail later, the Foreign Minister during the process of German unification was Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who served in this post for 18 years until his retirement in 1992.³ Genscher's tenure in office far exceeded Kohl's occupation of the Chancellery, giving him the aura of an enduring symbol of stability and continuity in German foreign policy.

Despite the constitutional constraints on the office of Chancellor and the demands of coalition politics, previous German leaders have managed leave their mark on foreign affairs. Konrad Adenauer, West Germany's first and longest-serving Chancellor until Kohl, oversaw the rearmament of Germany, its acceptance into the Atlantic Alliance, and forged an important symbolic relationship with French President Charles de Gaulle. In the late 1960s, Willy Brandt, the first Social Democrat to lead postwar West Germany, became closely identified with the early detente policy of *Ostpolitik* and became famous for his emotional visit to the Warsaw Ghetto.

By contrast, upon taking office as Chancellor in 1982 Helmut Kohl was not known for his foreign policy credentials. Rather, his expertise was in the mastery of domestic German politics,

³Udo Bergdoll, "Viele kleine Abschiede von der großen Rolle," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 12 May 1992, p. 3.

having served as the leader of the Christian Democratic opposition since 1973.⁴ Kohl rose to power within his party and maintained strict control by what one commentator has called a “combination of notebook and elephant’s memory,” rewarding his supporters with patronage and driving out those who challenge his leadership.⁵

Kohl’s first major foreign policy challenge was overseeing the deployment of new medium range nuclear missiles in response to the Soviet Union’s deployment of the SS-20 missile. The Chancellor withstood the many protests of the political opposition in Bonn and the anti-nuclear movement around the country. Kohl weathered this storm and won the subsequent national election, demonstrating his ability to remain loyal to the NATO Alliance and still get elected during height of Cold War tension in the 1980s.

However, although Kohl may have proved himself to be a capable leader in the missile deployment controversy, he was brought to this point in history not by his own strategic vision, but by the actions of two other German politicians. First, the decision to deploy new NATO missiles in Europe traces its roots back to a speech by Helmut Schmidt in London in October 1977.⁶ Second, Kohl’s rise to the office of Chancellor was made possible only after Hans-Dietrich Genscher took his Free Democratic Party out of the coalition with Schmidt and joined Kohl’s Christian Democrats. Kohl’s most impressive individual achievement at the time was to focus on the domestic situation and win the elections in 1983.

⁴Werner A. Perger, “Kanzler in den Zeiten der Dämmerung,” *Die Zeit*, 14 February 1997, p. 1.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 27.

Outside of Kohl's ability to win the elections and demonstrate his staunch loyalty to the Atlantic Alliance, his foreign policy record in the 1980s was marred by two particular instances. One was the much-criticized public visit with American President Ronald Reagan to a Bitburg cemetery which included the graves of Waffen SS members. The other was in 1986 when Kohl commented derisively on the popularity in the West of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, comparing him to the Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels.⁷

In public, at least, Chancellor Kohl seemed to lack the finesse in foreign affairs which his Foreign Minister, Genscher, and his Social Democratic predecessors as Chancellor had possessed. The Social Democrats had been given credit for reducing tensions in Europe with their policy called *Ostpolitik*. Genscher was seen as the government expert most capable of continuing *Ostpolitik* and dealing with the Soviets in matters pertaining to arms control. By contrast, Kohl was noted for his opposition to the practice of *Ostpolitik* under the SPD.⁸

The differences between Genscher and Kohl were given further definition in early 1989 as a new nuclear modernization controversy began to cause friction within NATO. The issue concerned the replacement of aging short-range nuclear missiles. Genscher favored including these systems in arms control negotiations. Kohl, on the other hand, sought to defer the issue and reassure the United States that Germany was not seeking the progressive de-nuclearization of Europe. No one on either side of the Atlantic, however, had any idea how quickly the strategic map of Europe was about to change.

⁷Philip Zelikow and Condoleeza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A study in Statecraft*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 77.

⁸Zelikow and Rice, p. 77.

From Tiananmen Square to the Brandenburg Gate

In the Summer of 1989 Helmut Kohl was waging a struggle within his own party with Heiner Geißler, a reform-minded leader, dealing with nuclear modernization, and facing the economic challenge of 1.9 million unemployed.⁹ However, in May Hungary had begun the process of dismantling its portion of the Iron Curtain along the border with Austria. Border guards passed out pieces of barbed wire as souvenirs of the occasion, but many observers dismissed the event as a publicity display and not evidence of fundamental reform.¹⁰

Although Hungary's opening of its Western border and Mikhail Gorbachev's much-touted efforts at reforming the Soviet Union were cause for hope that true change in East-West relations might be a reality in the future, events in China quickly dampened those hopes. In June, after several weeks of pro-democracy demonstrations by students in Beijing's Tienanmen Square, the Chinese armed forces sent tanks and other armored vehicles into the city to put an end to the students' protests. In the confrontations which followed, many of the students and other civilians were killed and hopes for democratic reform in China were squashed.

Most nations of the world condemned China's actions. Only a few hard-line Communist states approved of the crackdown, including Cuba and North Korea. Disturbingly for Europe, and West Germany in particular, the East German regime of Erich Honecker stood alone in affirming its support for China and defended the use of troops to prevent "a counter-revolutionary

⁹Werner A. Perger, "Kanzler in den Zeiten der Dämmerung," *Die Zeit*, 14 February 1997, p. 1.

¹⁰William Safire, "Ferment in Hungary: Old Wine, New Bottles," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6 May 1989, p. 3B.

overthrow” of the government.¹¹ Honecker rejected President Bush’s call for the dismantling of the Berlin Wall saying it was necessary to keep East Germany from being “bled white through economic plundering.”¹² Visiting West Germany at the same time, Egon Krenz, the man who would later replace Honecker as head of the East German state, declared that while the GDR was open to reform, it would not abandon Socialism. “Socialism on German soil is not open to question,” Krenz declared.¹³

East German resistance to reform, coupled with Hungary’s opening of its border with Austria provided frustrated East Germans with a tempting new possibility. Travel to Hungary from the GDR was relatively easy, once approval was received from the local police who worked in cooperation with the Ministry for State Security, also known as the *Stasi*. In 1988 only 2,118 individuals were refused the right to travel to this nearby fraternal Socialist state, and subsequently over 800,000 East Germans visited Hungary.¹⁴ Many GDR citizens passed through Hungary while on trips to other Soviet-bloc states. In late Summer 1989, East Germans began to slip across the Hungarian border into Austria while others sought refuge in West German embassies in Budapest, Prague and Warsaw.

The East German government eventually gave in to pressure and allowed those GDR

¹¹Daniel Johnson, “East Germans Pin Hopes to Church Door,” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 11 June 1989, p. 13.

¹²Jim Hoagland and Robert J. McCartney, “Honecker Lauds U.S. Arms Initiative,” *Washington Post*, 11 June 1989, p. A1.

¹³“Egon Krenz in Saarland Talks with SPD Leaders,” *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 12 June 1989, p. 1.

¹⁴Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer: die unbeabsichtigte Selbstaflösung des SED-Staates*, (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), p. 93.

citizens in Western embassies to depart for West Germany on board trains operated by the *Deutsche Reichsbahn*, the East German state railway. An editorial by the official Communist Party newspaper *Neues Deutschland* explained the refugees' exodus as a "deportation" of citizens who "would not have found a place within normal society upon return to the GDR, even if such a return had been possible."¹⁵ However, by October 1989 the Honecker regime was not only faced with the Westward flight of its citizens through Czechoslovakia and Hungary in a modified form of the Schlieffen Plan, but with growing discontent at home as well.

Many reform-minded East German citizens remained in the GDR, but began to stage public protests against the Communist government. On the evening of 9 October 1989, a crowd of 70,000 people marched in protest through the heart of Leipzig. This was the largest demonstration in the GDR since the uprising of June 1953 which had been put down by the Red Army.¹⁶ The marches in Leipzig became the prototype for what was called the Monday Demonstration, a weekly protest march which spread to other cities around East Germany.

In the face of growing domestic protests against the regime, the ruling Communist Party began to issue warnings suggesting that armed force might be used to stop the demonstrations. The threat to use force was dubbed the "Chinese solution," after the PRC's use of troops against pro-democratic protesters in Beijing just a few months before. In Leipzig, the center of the most organized opposition to the Honecker regime, the local official newspaper printed a letter by the

¹⁵*Neues Deutschland* editorial dated 2 October 1989, cited in *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944-1993*, edited by Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Gransow (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), p. 49.

¹⁶Hannes Bahrmann and Christoph Links, *Chronik der Wende: Die DDR zwischen 7. Oktober und 18. Dezember 1989*, (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1994), p. 18.

commander of the "workers' militia." If the protesters sought to overturn socialism, the official threatened that his forces would put a stop to the "...counterrevolutionary actions once and for all. If necessary with weapons in hand!"¹⁷ The workers militia was part of the overall GDR armed forces and totaled 400,000 men, 50,000 more than the active duty army.¹⁸

In early October, the situation in Eastern Germany began to look more and more like Beijing a few months earlier. Police used clubs, tear gas, dogs, and water cannon to break up demonstrations in several cities including the capital of East Berlin.¹⁹ At the same time, Honecker was meeting with visiting Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Yao Yilin. Official East German television reported that Yao and Honecker agreed "there was evidence of a particularly aggressive anti-socialist action by imperialist class opponents with the aim of reversing socialist development. In this respect, there is a fundamental lesson to be learned from the counterrevolutionary unrest in Beijing and the present campaign against [East Germany] and other socialist states."²⁰ However, a little more than a week after making such veiled threats, Honecker resigned from his office as the guardian of East German socialism, appointing Egon Krenz as his successor. With Honecker gone, official talk of a "Chinese solution" to crush dissent faded.

Throughout this period, West Germany looked anxiously at developments in the GDR.

¹⁷Jarausch and Gransow, p. 56.

¹⁸Jarausch and Gransow, p. 248.

¹⁹David Remnick, "Police Beat Protesters in E. Berlin: Hundreds Reported Jailed Over Weekend," *Washington Post*, 9 October 1989, p. A15.

²⁰Robert J. McCartney, "Tens of Thousands Protest in E. Germany: Honecker Hints at China-Style Crackdown," *Washington Post*, 10 October 1989, p. A1.

The dilemma was how to encourage reform without prompting a backlash by the Communist East against its citizens. Kohl's response was the most aggressive of all the leading German politicians. On 22 August, the Chancellor stated that the German question was "back on the international agenda."²¹ Genscher, by contrast, was more cautious and advised a continuation of traditional policy toward the East. He deflected talk of reunification by saying the term was "coined in the period of a Europe of nation states." Genscher held to a more evolutionary view of the process, stating "I speak of German unity before the United Nations year after year, but embedded in the development of Europe."²²

While also strongly committed to the development of European unity, the Chancellor was not a firm believer in classical *Ostpolitik*. Whereas *Ostpolitik* preached stability and accommodation in East-West relations, the rising number of Germans fleeing the GDR and the growing crowds who stayed behind to protest the Communist regime created a situation which was anything but stable. In a speech delivered two days after Honecker's resignation, Kohl declared "it cannot be in our interest if so many people as possible find the conditions in the GDR so unbearable that they leave it. Our interest must be that the people in Saxony, in Thüringen and Mecklenburg remain at home. . ."²³

Traditional policy would have suggested the provision of financial aid to improve the condition of citizens in the GDR and reduce their desire to flee to the more prosperous West, which was itself becoming increasingly burdened by the flood of newcomers. Kohl broke with

²¹Zelikow and Rice, p. 79.

²²Zelikow and Rice, p. 80.

²³Helmut Kohl, *Deutschlands Zukunft in Europa*, (Herford: Busse Seewald, 1990), p. 65.

this approach, denying economic aid to the new GDR government under Egon Krenz until fundamental reforms were introduced.²⁴ This established a pattern in relations with the East of using economic assistance as a lever which was to be followed throughout the unification process.

The greatest change in East German policy which followed was not political liberalization, however. Instead, the Communist leadership decided to make it easier for East Germans to cross the border into West Germany, hoping perhaps that this would reduce their desire to leave the GDR and never return. At the end of a press conference called on the evening of 9 November to report on the results of the latest Politburo meeting, an East German official, Günter Schabowski, read a prepared statement announcing that GDR residents would henceforth be allowed to travel to the West through all border checkpoints with very few restrictions. Within a few hours, thousands of Easterners gather at border crossings to test the new policy. Around midnight, individual commanders of border guards decided to simply open the gates.²⁵ After nearly thirty years of dividing East and West, the Berlin Wall had been breached.

Visions and Illusions: Making Unification Reality

The opening of the inner-German border came at an awkward time for Kohl. The Chancellor had just begun an official visit to Poland, flying from Bonn to Warsaw on 9 November. Although Kohl and his staff did not want to appear to be making a hasty decision to rush back to Germany, the Chancellor also did not want to appear aloof. In his diary, Kohl's national security advisor, Horst Teltschik, recalls how the Chancellor compared the historic

²⁴Zelikow and Rice, p. 92.

²⁵Bahrman, p. 92.

situation with the one facing Konrad Adenauer on the day of the Berlin Wall's construction in August 1961. Adenauer did not go directly to Berlin, but went to a political campaign event in Augsburg in southern Germany. Many Germans never forgave Adenauer for this. Having learned from Adenauer's mistake, Kohl returned from Poland just in time to join both Foreign Minister Genscher and Willy Brandt, former Chancellor and Mayor of Berlin, in giving speeches in Berlin on 10 November.²⁶

The first true working day for the Chancellor following the opening of the Berlin Wall was 11 November. However, the rapid pace of events taking place in Germany meant that traditional diplomatic communication methods were insufficient to address the many questions swirling about in the international community. This situation actually strengthened Kohl's position, making the Chancellor's personal telephone conversations with other world leaders the primary means of making known the official German position. Genscher, although the minister in charge of Germany's foreign relations, was not an integral part of these conversations as an American Secretary of State would have been. Genscher conducted his operations from the Foreign Ministry building, while Kohl worked in the Chancellor's Office (*Bundeskanzleramt*). Thus, the era of telephone diplomacy contributed directly to increasing Helmut Kohl's status as a statesman.

One of the most important conversations which Kohl held on 11 November was with Soviet President Gorbachev. Gorbachev asked the Chancellor to give the East German leadership time to reform the GDR. He urged Kohl to use his "authority, political weight, and influence" to

²⁶ Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innenansichten der Einigung*, (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1991), p. 16.

keep others in bounds and prevent the outbreak of chaos.²⁷ Kohl's direct personal contact with Gorbachev was quickly becoming an important mechanism for reassuring the Soviets that the West was not seeking to exploit the turmoil in the GDR for its own short term advantage. The importance of Gorbachev himself had been reemphasized the day before when Kohl's staff learned the Soviet leader had prevailed upon the East German leadership to allow a "peaceful transition" and not resort to a "Chinese solution."²⁸

Despite his assurances to the Soviets that Germany would follow a calm, measured approach, the Chancellor later that same day would bring up the explosive topic of unification. Speaking at a press conference, Kohl emphasized the basic focus of his policy toward the GDR was on encouraging freedom and reform in the East, leading to eventual self-determination for East Germans. As for what choice the East Germans would make once they were able to decide their own future, the Chancellor replied: "I have no doubt as to what they want. There is no doubt that the Germans want the unity of their nation."²⁹

After having raised the central issue of the German question once again, Kohl shifted the focus of his personal efforts away from inner German relations toward international affairs. First, he resumed his official visit to Poland which had been interrupted by the fall of the Berlin Wall. Throughout the process of German unification, the Polish government was anxious for the Chancellor to make a statement formally recognizing the Oder and Neisse Rivers as the eastern

²⁷Hans-Hermann Hertle, *Der Fall der Mauer: Die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates*, (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1996), p. 287.

²⁸Teltschik, p. 23.

²⁹Teltschik, p. 29.

border of Germany. To the consternation of his coalition partners in Germany and closest friends in the West, Kohl repeatedly sought to defer this issue until a unified German parliament could pass a formal statement.³⁰ However, the debate was also deeply rooted in domestic German politics. Kohl did not want to alienate the thousands of German voters who had been forced out of the former German territories in the East.

The next major event for the Chancellor was a summit meeting bringing together the leaders of the 12 member states of the European Community. Having recently raised the issue of self-determination for East Germany, Kohl sought to deflect attention away from the potential unification of Germany as a purely national development, emphasizing the need to bind it into the overall process of European integration. Although Kohl sought to organize a common stance among European leaders in favor of German unification, he was soon to make a bold move which would surprise the other eleven leaders.

Once back in Germany, Kohl's aides began working under the leadership of National Security Advisor Teltschik to develop a framework for achieving German unification. After reviewing the proposal and making some changes, Kohl presented the resulting plan in a speech to the *Bundestag* on 28 November 1989. What became known as the Ten Point Plan can be summarized as follows:

First, the West German government offered to provide immediate humanitarian aid or medical assistance where it is desired and considered helpful.

Second, cooperation with the GDR was recognized as of being continuing mutual benefit in economic, scientific, technological and cultural fields. Environmental protection was also noted as an area of particular concern.

³⁰Teltschik, p. 171.

Third, comprehensive aid and cooperation was offered providing the GDR carried out irreversible change in agreement with opposition groups. The Communist Party was required to give up its monopoly of power, allow free elections, and release all political prisoners.

Fourth, GDR Prime Minister Modrow's offer of a "treaty community" (*Vertragsgemeinschaft*) was accepted as a basis for creating common institutions between the two German states.

Fifth, the West German government proposed the development of "confederative structures" once free elections have been held in the GDR. These structures would include an intergovernmental committee and a joint parliamentary body.

Sixth, German relations were linked to the overall framework of European relations, respecting the security and integrity of each state.

Seventh, the West German government advocated the early conclusion of a trade agreement between the GDR and the European Community. The European Community was to be strengthened and made more open toward the reformist countries of Central and Southeastern Europe.

Eighth, the CSCE process was cited as a central element of the pan-European "architecture" which should be matched with other common pan-European councils.

Ninth, arms control and disarmament were presupposed as necessary steps for overcoming the division of both Europe and Germany.

Tenth, "Reunification--that is regaining national unity--remains the political goal of the federal government."³¹

With the announcement of the Ten Point Plan, Kohl moved far ahead of current accepted thinking in Europe regarding the both the process and desirability of achieving German unification. Although the actual proposals may seem modest in retrospect, the simple fact that the German Chancellor had put forth a step-by-step plan which culminated in the longstanding goal of national unity made the prospect of a unified Germany seem suddenly closer to reality.

The presentation of the plan to the *Bundestag* was another important step in transforming

³¹Jaraus and Gransow, pp. 86-89.

Kohl into the dominant statesman in Germany, eclipsing his more popular Foreign Minister. In practice, Genscher was excluded from the formulation of the plan, although he professed support afterwards. As Teltschik noted in this diary, the plan achieved its desired effect in seeing to it that “the Chancellor has taken over leadership of opinion regarding the German question.”³²

In the rest of Europe, however, the plan was not as warmly received as it had been in Bonn. Most ominously for Germany, the reaction of the Soviet leader was extremely hostile. Speaking after the Malta summit with President Bush, Gorbachev began criticizing the Kohl plan saying that “History itself decides the processes and the fates of the European continent as well as the fate of both German states. . . Any artificial acceleration of the process would only make things worse and complicate changes in many European countries.”³³ In the Soviet view, concrete proposals such as the Ten Point Plan obviously constituted such an “artificial acceleration.” When Genscher visited Gorbachev in the wake of Kohl’s proposal, the German Foreign Minister personally became the target of the Soviet leader’s wrath. According to one account, Gorbachev treated Genscher “like an errant child,” denouncing the Ten Point Plan as a “diktat.”³⁴ Gorbachev sought to emphasize in his meeting with French President Mitterrand the following day that rapid movement toward German unity would only hasten the demise of reform in the Soviet Union. Reportedly, Gorbachev told Mitterrand that on the day after German unification “a Soviet marshal will be sitting in my chair.”³⁵ He also spoke of his sharp treatment

³²Teltschik, p. 58.

³³Teltschik, p. 63.

³⁴Zelikow and Rice, p. 136.

³⁵Zelikow and Rice, p. 137.

of Genscher.

Despite his close partnership with Kohl, Mitterrand was not an ardent supporter of the Chancellor's bold new initiative. Mitterrand was planning a visit to East Germany, even though this act would likely strengthen the position of Hans Modrow, the GDR's new leader following the resignation of Egon Krenz. The French leader actually found himself sharing concerns about Germany with Britain's Prime Minister Thatcher. In private meetings during an EC summit in Strasbourg, Thatcher contemplated working with Mitterrand to help in "stopping or slowing down reunification." In these private talks, Mitterrand reportedly criticized Kohl's plan and made disparaging comments about the Germans.³⁶

In the end, however, Kohl was able to assuage French concerns about German unification by emphasizing the strengthening of the European Community in parallel with Germany unity. This was not an approach which would do anything to reduce the tension building in Britain, however. Mrs. Thatcher had become infamous in Brussels for her opposition to the creation of a centralized European superstate. One of her Cabinet ministers, Nicholas Ridley, would later resign after denouncing European integration as "a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe."³⁷ Thatcher was not likely to gain supporters in Europe by attacking the EC, but she did find another context in which to criticize the prospect of early German unity.

In an interview with the Wall Street Journal in January 1990, Thatcher picked up the theme Gorbachev had used in his talks with Mitterrand. The British Prime Minister urged caution

³⁶Zelikow and Rice, p. 137.

³⁷Thomas Eagleton, "What Nasty Things Old Ridley Uttered," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 22 July 1990, p. 3B.

and suggested the Germans should subordinate their national goals to the long-term interests of Europe. Otherwise, Gorbachev and his reforms could be put in danger. In addition, she claimed German unity would disrupt the economic balance of the European Community, in which West Germany was already dominant.³⁸

According to his advisor Teltschik, the Chancellor was extremely distressed about Thatcher's pronouncements, in part because they were printed in a prominent American newspaper. Fortunately for Kohl, the American administration was generally at ease with the prospect of German unification. Without early American support, Kohl's project could have been smothered by negativism in Europe. The US did share the concern of other Western allies that a hasty push for unity could be destabilizing.³⁹ However, in a meeting with Secretary of State Baker two weeks after unveiling the Ten Point Plan, Kohl was careful to emphasize that the plan was not a timetable, but a framework.⁴⁰

Although Kohl had presented a vision for how the evolution of inner-German relations should develop, he did not have a definite idea of the time required to make this vision reality. The overall process of achieving unity was generally expected to take years. However, such expectations were founded on an illusion about the true state of conditions in East Germany. The GDR had been viewed as the most developed economy in Eastern Europe. At the time, the *EC Bulletin* estimated living standard was "higher than Ireland, Greece, and Portugal, but lower than

³⁸Teltschik, p. 116.

³⁹Stephen F. Szabo, *The Diplomacy of German Unification*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 41.

⁴⁰Teltschik, p. 77.

Spain.⁴¹

Once the Berlin Wall had fallen, however, the only comparison that mattered was with Western Germany. The Communist Party was quickly losing control of the political and economic situation in the GDR. East Germans continued to move to West Germany in search of better opportunities and freedom. In the first ten days of the new year 1990, over 20,000 had crossed over the border to settle in West Germany.⁴² Unless something was done to improve conditions in the GDR, German unity might be the result of all East German citizens simply moving to the West, abandoning the GDR altogether.

Sudden Collapse and Surprise Victory

Despite the deterioration of the situation in East Germany, Kohl held firm to his policy of insisting on fundamental political change in the East before providing substantial assistance. Confronted with an ever increasing loss of control during the month of January, Modrow called for free elections to be held by 18 March. Rather than rejoicing in the prospect of finally seeing the East Germans have their chance to exercise self-determination as the Chancellor had insisted upon, Kohl and his advisors were gravely concerned.

The GDR elections were only seven weeks away and unlike its political rivals, Kohl's Christian Democratic party had yet to settle upon a political partner in the East. Although a Christian Democratic party already existed in East Germany, it was considered a dubious ally,

⁴¹Peter H. Merkl, *German Unification in the European Context*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 234.

⁴²Teltschik, p. 103.

having been tolerated as an official opposition during the Communist era. Kohl was particularly skeptical of its party leader, Lothar de Maziere, who had previously stated in public that he believed Socialism to be "one of the most beautiful visions of human thought."⁴³ Like many other East German politicians with roots in the old system, de Maser was suspected of being a collaborator with the secret police.⁴⁴ In the end, Kohl's party accepted the Eastern Christian Democrats as their partners along with an alliance of smaller conservative parties. More significantly, however, the Chancellor decided to cancel his previously scheduled trip to Brazil and Chile in order to be personally active in campaign events in the GDR. Kohl was not about to "leave the field to Willy Brandt and Hans-Dietrich Genscher."⁴⁵

There was much at stake for Kohl in the March elections. Not only would the vote obviously be interpreted as a referendum on unification, but more importantly, it would determine the fundamental orientation of the East German state which would seek to combine with its Western neighbor. Given the Social Democrats' advantage in having established a political organization in the East early on, many observers predicted a victory for the SPD. This would have not simply represented an electoral defeat for Kohl's party, but would have seriously complicated the Chancellor's efforts to achieve unification on terms compatible with the basic tenets of his statecraft.

The most glaring concern was raised by the fact that the Social Democratic parties in both East and West had issued a joint statement declaring "a future united Germany should belong

⁴³Teltschik, p. 38.

⁴⁴"Es muß alles raus," *Der Spiegel*, 26 March 1990, p. 26.

⁴⁵Teltschik, p. 118.

neither to NATO nor to the Warsaw Pact.”⁴⁶ Neutrality in security affairs would be a step toward decoupling Germany from a West-oriented outlook, perhaps derailing the drive to achieve greater integration within the European Community. Furthermore, a new Leftist GDR government might also seek to rejuvenate the Socialist traditions of Eastern Germany and oppose the adoption of a market economy in favor of some vaguely defined “third way” combining market prices and Socialism.⁴⁷

Therefore, the campaign in Eastern Germany was not simply about the desirability of German unification, but would also determine the terms of unification and thereby define the character of the future unified German state. Kohl’s personal intervention in the campaign on behalf of the Eastern Christian Democrats did not bring clear results, however. Polls taken four days before the election showed the SPD drawing 44% of the vote as opposed to only 20% for the Eastern CDU. At the same time, East Germans were still voting with their feet as thousands continued to cross the border and settle in the West.⁴⁸

In the end, however, the conservatives turned the dire forecasts upside down. The Eastern CDU and its conservative allies received 48.2% of the votes cast. With the 5% won by the FDP, they were able to form a governing coalition which mirrored almost identically the one in Bonn. The Social Democrats were stunned by their lackluster performance, drawing only

⁴⁶Zelikow and Rice, p. 203.

⁴⁷Alfred Herrhausen, “Toward a Unified Germany,” *New York Times*, 7 January 1990, p. 2.

⁴⁸Teltschik, p. 173.

21.8%⁴⁹. The former Communist Party, renamed the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) managed to survive its first free election and won 16.3% of the votes.⁵⁰

Despite their organizational advantage in the East, the Social Democrats had suffered from the perception of being less than enthusiastic about rapid unification. Kohl, by contrast, campaigned on a platform promising unity and economic prosperity. The success of the GDR conservative parties was seen as an endorsement of Kohl's policies, not an achievement of the Easterners themselves. Kohl now seemingly had a mandate to push on toward unification. Even the Left-leaning news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, conceded that "with the election victory of 18 March behind him, Kohl can now more confidently project himself abroad as the executor of the Germans' will for unification."⁵¹

Two Plus Four Equals One

Although the conservative victory in the GDR gave Kohl the needed momentum to continue his efforts to achieve unification, the Chancellor still faced considerable domestic and international obstacles. Domestically, the challenges included achieving economic and monetary union between the two Germanies as well as deciding upon the constitutional framework for unification. Internationally, Kohl had to convince the Soviets (and some Germans) that a united Germany should remain in NATO and not sacrifice integration in Western institutions in order to

⁴⁹Serge Schmemmann, "Upheaval in the East: Kohl is Reported Intent on Slowing Unity with East," *New York Times*, 20 March 1990, p. 1.

⁵⁰"Es gibt keine DDR mehr," *Der Spiegel*, 19 March 1990, p. 21.

⁵¹"Es gibt keine DDR mehr," p. 21.

gain unification.

The greatest direct benefit Kohl derived from the victory in the Eastern elections was that he was dealing with a reasonably friendly partner in the GDR, one far less likely to oppose the fundamental constitutional choice of how to achieve unification. It was, after all, the legal aspect of unifying the two German states which seem to require the longest time to resolve. As a result, the same edition of *Der Spiegel* which noted the added momentum Kohl's victory gave to the process of unification still predicted the earliest prospects for unity were in 1991/92.⁵²

Two fundamentally different paths to unification were available as options, both deriving from specific articles in the existing West German constitution. The first option was to achieve unity under Article 23 which proclaimed:

"This constitution is valid for the present in the territories of the states of Baden, Bavaria, Bremen, Greater Berlin, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein, Wuerttemberg-Baden and Wuerttemberg-Hohenzollern. In other parts of Germany it is to enter into force after their accession (*Beitritt*)."⁵³

This was the method used to bring the Saarland back into Germany in 1957 after having been disassociated from Germany following World War II.

The second option was represented by Article 146. Under this provision, the existing West German constitution could be replaced by a new constitution agreed upon by the German people upon unification. This process would of course take longer to complete as it would involve drafting a new legal document acceptable to both East and West.

⁵²"Es wird ein anderer Staat," *Der Spiegel*, 19 March 1990, p. 34.

⁵³Cited in *Der Spiegel*, 12 Feb 90, p. 17.

For Chancellor Kohl's government, Article 23 was the preferred course as it would not only make it easier to achieve unification, but also avoided potentially divisive domestic political conflict in the run-up to federal elections in December 1990. One issue of particular concern was abortion which was illegal in the West except in special cases.⁵⁴ East Germans had the right to abortion on demand until the twelfth week of pregnancy. The Social Democrats were prepared to make abortion an issue in the coming election and would have certainly fought to make changes in the constitution if it were rewritten under Article 146, including not only abortion but other perceived social rights.⁵⁵ Pursuing unity under Article 23 and keeping the current West German constitution avoided this turmoil and served Kohl's interests in the subsequent campaign.

The choice of Article 23 also directly affected the future identity of Eastern Germany. The GDR was not joining the West as one integral state, but was first dissected into five federal states (*Länder*). These five new federal states would then join the West German republic as the Saarland had done thirty years before. This method of unification precluded the creation of trans-border states which would have brought together people from the East and West into one state. Despite a brief discussion regarding the transfer of a small amount of territory from the Eastern state of Thüringen to the Western state of Bavaria, the concept of creating states which transcended the old border between East and West was apparently not given serious

⁵⁴Ferdinand Protzman, "Abortion Shifting German Alliances," *New York Times*, 26 August 1990, p. 9.

⁵⁵"Anschluß ist ein falscher Begriff," Interview with Wolfgang Schäuble and Markus Meckel, *Der Spiegel*, 19 March 1990, pp. 48-57.

consideration.⁵⁶ Article 1 of the treaty establishing German unity recognized the former states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, and Thüringen. Under Article 3 of that treaty, these new states and East Berlin came under the jurisdiction of the West German constitution.⁵⁷

Although unification in the legal, constitutional sense was achieved on 3 October 1990, the rapid deterioration of the East German economy and the continuing flow of Germans from the GDR into West Germany made the issue of early economic unification critical. This represented a challenge for Kohl's ability to function effectively as a leader for both East and West. The Chancellor had to convince Easterners there were sufficient grounds for optimism to justify their staying put in the GDR and not migrating to the West. On the other side, Kohl had to reassure West Germans that their standard of living would not suffer as a result of efforts to help the East.

The central question in the process of achieving economic unity remained what exchange rate to establish between the two national currencies on 1 July 1990. Several plans were circulated which placed a limit on the amount which Easterners could exchange their GDR currency for D-Marks at the most favorable 1:1 rate. In many cases, the upper limit was only 1,000 Marks. The remainder would have to be traded at 1:10 or put in an account with fixed interest rates for ten years, then withdrawn at the more favorable rate of 1:1.⁵⁸

Although promises of a 1:1 exchange rate were popular in the East and helped swing

⁵⁶Peter H. Merkl, *German Unification in the European Context*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 206.

⁵⁷Cited in "BRD/DDR: 3. Oktober - Tag der deutschen Einheit," *Der Standard*, 1 September 1990, p. 1.

⁵⁸"Milliarden auf Jahre Hinaus," *Der Spiegel*, 12 February 1990, p. 26.

opinion toward the conservatives in the March elections, the proposal was extremely controversial in Western Germany. A poll by *Der Spiegel* in April found 60% of West Germans opposing a 1:1 exchange rate for East German currency. Westerners feared a destabilization of the D-Mark, the symbol of postwar economic strength.⁵⁹ Their concerns were shared by officials of the German central bank (*Bundesbank*) who also opposed the 1:1 exchange rate out of concern for inflation. However, Kohl reportedly crushed a “rebellion” among the central bank’s officials and decided in favor of the 1:1 swap with the East.⁶⁰ In the end, it was decided to convert wages, salaries, and savings all at the 1:1 rate.

This debate is particularly interesting when considering two aspects of the current discussion in Germany regarding the proposed common European currency, the Euro. First is the fear that the introduction of the Euro will mean trading the strong D-Mark for a weaker pan-European currency more prone to inflation. Second, is the German insistence on the political independence of the future European central bank, using the *Bundesbank* as a model. Despite Chancellor Kohl’s firm public commitment to these two principles, the experience of achieving monetary union with the GDR seems to indicate that economic ideals will be readily sacrificed if the political objective of unity is deemed more important in the long run.

Kohl’s government decided to pursue this course of action while remaining dedicated to the policy of not raising taxes on West Germans.⁶¹ German economy was in “excellent shape”

⁵⁹“Wird die Einheit zu teuer?” *Der Spiegel*, 2 April 1990, p. 43.

⁶⁰Hobart Rowen, “Colossus Germany Already Striking Fear,” *Washington Post*, 22 July 1990, p. 1.

⁶¹Teltschik, p. 204.

according to Norbert Walter, chief economist for Deutsche Bank, and the nation's growth rate was forecast at an impressive 4 percent.⁶² Unfortunately for Germany, Western economic performance slowed down to a current level for 1997 of only 2.3 percent.⁶³

Other structural problems remained in the GDR which could not easily be rectified by a Chancellor's generosity in setting currency exchange rates. Housing for East Germans was artificially cheap, with some citizens paying as little as 60 to 70 Marks per month for a three room apartment.⁶⁴ Another problem was the simple fact that many of the products turned out by the GDR's factories, from Trabant cars to Robotron computers, were not competitive in the West European market.⁶⁵ With the East German currency replaced by the hard West German Mark, the trading relationship established within the former Soviet bloc was virtually destroyed. Not only did the GDR suffer the loss of markets for its products, but neighboring countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary were affected.

The alternative, advocated by the Modrow government until its demise, would have been to defer economic union and keep the GDR in this Eastern economic system for a longer time in order to soften the impact on East Germany's citizens and its neighbors.⁶⁶ However, this would have certainly required postponing political unification as well. In the end, the rapid economic

⁶²Transcript of Press Conference with Norbert Walter, *Federal News Service*, 27 July 1990, p. 1.

⁶³"Economic Indicators," *The Economist*, 12 April 1997, p. 108.

⁶⁴"Angst vor den Miethaien," *Der Spiegel*, 12 February 1990, p. 108.

⁶⁵"Dann bricht alles zusammen," *Der Spiegel*, 7 May 1990, p. 22.

⁶⁶Author's interview with Hans Modrow in Bonn, 20 February 1992.

disintegration of East Germany may have been a benefit. The longer the GDR remained a viable state, especially once free elections had been held, the closer it would come to establishing its own separate identity and legitimacy as a state in the post-Communist era. This would have complicated the politics of unification, making the aforementioned process under Article 23 of the West German constitution less practicable.

However, the greatest political obstacle to German unity was not the question of how to merge the two nations' economies, but whether or not the Soviet Union could be persuaded to accept the prospect of a united Germany. With 360,000 Soviet troops and 200,000 of their dependents in East Germany, the USSR had a distinct interest in the outcome of events.⁶⁷ Kohl's challenge was to find a way to make German unification acceptable to the Soviets while at the same time preserving Germany's close ties with the West, particularly its membership in NATO. Doing so would require the skillful use of West Germany's economic strength as a tool of statecraft.

Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Gorbachev had been making known to all who would hear that those who pushed for rapid German unification would only succeed in bringing about his removal from power and thereby an end to reforms in the USSR. In the months which followed, however, this same dire prediction of Gorbachev's impending ouster came to be used as a useful means for extracting aid from the Germans. In the winter of 1989-90, the Soviet ambassador to West Germany, Kwizinski, contacted Kohl's advisor, Teltschik. His message was that the USSR was desperately short of meat and other basic food items. Fearing that food

⁶⁷Serge Schmemmann, "Agreement on Soviet Withdrawal Brings German Settlement Closer," *New York Times*, 11 September 1990, p. A8.

shortages would bring about Gorbachev's fall and thereby extinguish hopes for unification, Kohl personally made the telephone call to find out how much food could be delivered in the shortest time. Within an hour, arrangements had been to deliver 120,000 metric tons of meat within the next four to six weeks.⁶⁸ Teltschik later summarized Kohl's view of the aid initiative as "contributing more to security in Europe than new weapons systems," likely a reference to the previous summertime debate over nuclear modernization.⁶⁹ One effect of the food shipment became clear within a few days, as the Soviet Union's attitude toward the acceptability of unification began to improve.

While the USSR gradually accepted the prospect of a united Germany, it remained fiercely opposed to the extension of NATO membership to the territory of the GDR. Kohl was deeply concerned about giving any impression that Germany's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance was weakening. Foreign Minister Genscher, while in favor of keeping Germany in NATO, seemed to have greater worries that the possible extension of NATO to include GDR territory would undermine the chances for achieving German unification. In an interview on 28 January he stated: "Whoever wants to extend the border of NATO to the Oder and Neisse rivers slams the door closed for a unified Germany."⁷⁰ The issue soon became a bitter public battle within Kohl's government between Genscher and the Minister of Defense, Gerhard Stoltenberg. Kohl was eventually forced to issue a statement using language more supportive of Genscher's position,

⁶⁸Teltschik, p. 100.

⁶⁹Teltschik, p. 102.

⁷⁰Teltschik, p. 117.

weakening the Chancellor's negotiating position with the Soviets.⁷¹

Genscher also frustrated Kohl's efforts to negotiate the future manpower strength of the combined German armed forces. Genscher consistently advocated a level of 350,000 troops. Kohl's response, according to Teltschik, was that an opening offer of 350,000 in talks with the Soviets would lead to a final result of 280,000. The Chancellor insisted on keeping these numbers out of the Two Plus Four negotiations.⁷² Kohl and Genscher continued to disagree on the final strength of the armed forces even as they arrived in the USSR in July 1990 for what would be the critical negotiations on Germany's future status in NATO.

Fortunately for Chancellor Kohl, the Soviet attitude toward the NATO question could be altered by the provision of another form of assistance, this time financial. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze first raised the issue before the Two Plus Four negotiating session in May.⁷³ Kohl followed up by secretly sending Teltschik to Moscow on board a West German military aircraft accompanied by two representatives of Germany's largest private banks, Hilmar Kopper of Deutsche Bank and Wolfgang Röller of Dresdner Bank.⁷⁴ The mission resulted in a German \$3 billion loan guarantee at a time when the Soviet Union's credit worthiness was suspect.

In a subsequent visit with President Bush in Washington, Kohl discussed the loans offered to the Soviets and urged the President to join the effort. Bush, however, insisted that Gorbachev

⁷¹Zelikow and Rice, p. 204.

⁷²Teltschik, p. 294.

⁷³Teltschik, p. 221.

⁷⁴Zelikow and Rice, p. 258.

must first enact substantial reforms before the United States would provide aid.⁷⁵ Ironically, this was similar to the position Kohl had taken with respect to aid to East Germany less than a year earlier. Bush also noted that Soviet actions in Lithuania made it difficult for the US to justify giving any financial aid at that time. Kohl's reply was that it was in the common interest of the West for Gorbachev to continue his policy of reform. Although the Lithuanians would have the Chancellor's sympathy, they could not determine the foreign policy of the West.⁷⁶ For Kohl, loan guarantees to the USSR were an acceptable price to pay for achieving German unity.

The difference of opinion regarding aid to the USSR was an indication of the extent to which Kohl now felt sufficiently confident to act independently of the United States and other allies in relations with the Soviets, using Germany's economic power as a basis for action. This represented a break with traditional German policy of working within NATO or the European Community to achieve its goals, avoiding a purely national profile. The process of unification was having an impact not only on the international role of Germany, but also Kohl's status as a statesman. An unnamed Republican Senator was quoted as saying "The transformation is quite phenomenal. Kohl used to come here as a kind of supplicant, but now he comes into a room and senior people defer to him. He's polite and good-humored of course, but he dominates conversation."⁷⁷

Despite Germany's increasing influence, important questions had to be resolved before it

⁷⁵Zellikow and Rice, p. 259.

⁷⁶Teltschik, p. 237.

⁷⁷John Cassidy, "German Treaty Puts American Noses out of Joint," *The Sunday Times*, 22 July 1990, p. 1.

could enjoy full sovereignty. These final details were settled in bilateral talks between German and Soviet leaders in July 1990. Although Kohl and Genscher became embroiled in a heated argument en route to the meeting with Gorbachev, the two men worked together smoothly once talks with the Soviets began. The result was an agreement which removed the final obstacles to Germany's unification. The eight major points included:

1. The unification of Germany would include the Federal Republic, the GDR, and Berlin.
2. The rights of the Four Powers would terminate following German unification; a unified Germany would enjoy full and unrestricted sovereignty.
3. The united Germany would be permitted to join any alliance it wished.
4. Germany and the USSR agreed to conclude a bilateral treaty to permit the withdrawal of Soviet forces within three to four years.
5. As long as Soviet troops were on German soil, no NATO structures would be extended to East Germany. Articles 5 and 6 of the NATO Treaty would take effect immediately upon unification, however. West German troops which were not integrated in NATO could be deployed to the East immediately following unification as well.
6. As long as Soviet troops remained in the territory of the former GDR, the three Western powers would maintain their troop presence in Berlin.
7. Germany would declare its commitment to reduce its armed forces to 370,000 men within the framework of the Vienna arms control negotiations.
8. Unified Germany would renounce the production, storage, and use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and remain a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.⁷⁸

The July agreement was not the Soviets' last word on the issue, however. Shortly before the signing of the final Two Plus Four agreement on Germany, Gorbachev called Kohl to make one final financial request. Kohl offered an overall package of DM 8 billion to help pay for the construction of new housing in the USSR for the armed forces withdrawn from Eastern Germany. According to Teltschik, Gorbachev reacted very negatively to this proposal, insisting it would lead to a dead end. The costs of housing construction and the related infrastructure would alone

⁷⁸Zelikow and Rice, pp. 341-342.

total DM 11 billion. Gorbachev argued that the inclusion of transport costs would drive the price higher still.⁷⁹ The final package of DM 12 billion coupled with DM 3 billion in interest free credits was agreed upon only after Kohl personally haggled with Gorbachev on the telephone.⁸⁰

The Gulf Crisis: Unified Germany's First Test

The formal unification of Germany was partially eclipsed by the outbreak of a new crisis, brought on by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. As the United States began to deploy armed forces to the Persian Gulf, the attention given to European affairs dropped precipitously. This development emphasized the critical importance of timing in making German unification possible. Had the process not been pushed forward by Kohl's proposals for unity and the rapid economic and political disintegration of the GDR, it would have been extremely difficult to focus the attention of the US, Western Europe, and the USSR on the necessary questions.

Having benefitted from the assistance of Germany's allies in achieving unification, Chancellor Kohl felt obliged to contribute to the international effort opposing the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Germany's increased international profile brought with it expectations in the United States and other Western countries that the Germans should contribute to the international coalition gathering to oppose Saddam Hussein. For Kohl, providing troops was not a easy option. Organizationally and structurally, the German armed forces were not ready for combat outside Europe. The German army had been designed to fight a major war on the Central Front of Europe where a large army of conscripts and mobilized reservists was desirable.

⁷⁹Teltschik, p. 360.

⁸⁰Zelikow and Rice, p. 352.

Kohl's response was to suggest sending a minesweeper to the Persian Gulf to assist the gathering coalition forces. However, this proposal quickly ran aground when Genscher's Free Democrats objected, arguing for a more restrictive in view of Germany's legal ability under its postwar constitution to project power outside of its own territory.⁸¹ The Chancellor finally agreed that a constitutional amendment would be necessary in order to deploy German troops outside the traditional NATO area, but he pledged to push for such an amendment after German unification.⁸²

Unfortunately, Kohl's assertion that a constitutional change was necessary began a four-year struggle over the issue of sending German troops on so-called 'out of area' missions. By insisting on an amendment to Germany's Basic Law, Kohl had chosen an option he did not have the political power to exercise. Although the Chancellor's coalition government controlled the *Bundestag*, the opposition Social Democrats controlled the *Bundestag* whose approval was necessary in order to change the country's constitution. The SPD was opposed to the idea of sending German troops to fight abroad and was not about to give Kohl an amendment to permit out of area operations. After four years of wrangling, the debate was resolved when the Social Democrats brought a case before the German Constitutional Court challenging the government's ability to send forces to join the NATO operation in the Balkans. The court denied that a constitutional amendment was needed, as Kohl had suggested several years before. Rather, approval by a majority vote of the *Bundestag* was sufficient to authorize participation in

⁸¹David Binder, "Confrontation in the Gulf: West Germany, In Bonn, a Debate On Limits of Power," *New York Times*, 18 August 1990, p. 6.

⁸²Pierre Simonitsch, "NATO: Eiertanz um Entsendung von NATO-Truppen an den Golf," *Der Standard*, 12 September 1990, p. 1.

multilateral military operations.⁸³

Denied the ability to make a direct military contribution to the Gulf coalition, the Chancellor turned to a different tool of statecraft, economic assistance, which had served him well in securing Germany's unification. Although already paying billions to the Soviets for the relocation of their armed forces back to the USSR, Germany also contributed large sums to pay for the costs of the anti-Iraq coalition in the Gulf. This form of statecraft was often derided as mere checkbook diplomacy, particularly when American or British critics pointed out that Germany wasn't risking the lives of its soldiers as were the US, UK, and other nations. Nevertheless, the Germans did make other tangible contributions to the Allied effort in the Gulf which were likely more important to the immediate conduct of operations than was financial support. Specifically, Kohl's government provided substantial assistance in moving US equipment which had been stationed in Germany, but was needed in the deserts of Saudi Arabia.⁸⁴

Although the crisis technically began before the formal completion of German unification, the Gulf War became the first test of Chancellor Kohl's leadership of a united Germany. Yet despite the restoration of Germany's sovereignty, important limitations remained on Kohl's ability to use the military instrument. In retrospect, however, it is perhaps fortunate that Germany was not able to make a substantial military contribution to the coalition which later defeated Saddam Hussein. The political complications associated with German involvement in combat could easily

⁸³Kenneth S. Kilimnik, "Germany's Army After Reunification: The Merging of the Nationale Volksarmee into the Bundeswehr, 1990-1994," *Military Law Review*, Summer, 1994, p. 20.

⁸⁴Ferdinand Protzman, "Confrontation in the Gulf: Bonn, Heeding Critics in U.S., Will Provide Planes and Ships for Gulf Effort," *New York Times*, 15 September 1990, p. 5.

have undermined Kohl's chances for reelection in the December 1990 elections and also triggered a backlash in the USSR, jeopardizing the withdrawal of Soviet forces from the East.

Conclusion: Unfinished Business or Unlimited Ambition?

Since achieving German unification nearly seven years ago, Helmut Kohl has reached another milestone in German history, becoming the longest-serving Chancellor in postwar Germany, a distinction previously held by Konrad Adenauer. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, his long-serving Foreign Minister and frequent political competitor, retired in 1992 leaving Kohl unchallenged as the dominant political leader of unified Germany. Since 1990 Kohl has turned much his attention to using the momentum of Germany's unification to help drive the movement toward greater European unification.

He recently cited his desire to oversee the completion of European monetary union as a major factor in his decision to seek yet another term in office when Germany holds elections in 1998. This has prompted some in Germany to wonder aloud "is the 'Chancellor of Unity' thus in the meantime not much more a part of the problem than a helper in the solution?"⁸⁵ Serious economic problems including high unemployment, lack of global competitiveness, the need for tax reform, and the growing burden of social welfare programs have only worsened since unification, suggesting a new leadership with new ideas is needed.

Unfortunately for Kohl's Christian Democratic party the Chancellor has not groomed an obvious successor. By contrast, in the course of his career he has crushed anyone in his party

⁸⁵Werner A. Perger, "Kanzler in den Zeiten der Dämmerung," *Die Zeit*, 14 February 1997, p. 1.

who represented a threat to his leadership. Only recently was Kohl's senior lieutenant, Wolfgang Schäuble, able to express publicly his own feelings of "temptation" to run for Chancellor without being quickly disciplined.⁸⁶ Yet Schäuble's physical handicap, confinement to a wheelchair after an assassination attempt, is also seen as a political handicap which may hurt his chances of winning.

However, not only is Kohl unchallenged in the leadership of his own party, he has also made an impact on his political opposition, the Social Democrats. The SPD has yet to produce a leader able to unify the party and appeal to the country as a whole. In some respects, Kohl's status in Germany is somewhat analogous to Margaret Thatcher in Britain. Thatcher was not wildly popular in the UK, but her effectiveness as a leader, coupled with the unattractiveness of the opposition Labour Party, contributed to her winning successive elections. Similarly, a recent survey of German voters found that 57% "would not welcome" Kohl's reelection as Chancellor. Nevertheless, 59% believe he will be successful in running for another term.⁸⁷

The same poll also asked voters to compare Kohl with the two leading candidates from the Social Democrats, Oscar Lafontaine and Gerhard Schröder. When asked who was the "strongest leader," the response was 63% for Kohl, 7% for Lafontaine, and 20% for Schröder. As for which politician in Germany has the greatest political vision (*Weitsicht*), Kohl comes out on top with 48%, compared to 15% and 13% for Lafontaine and Schröder, respectively.

When the same questions were asked of voters who stated their intention to vote for the

⁸⁶Alan Cowell, "Germans Wonder: Twilight for Kohl?", *New York Times*, 15 February 1997, p. 8.

⁸⁷"Wer soll Kanzler werden?" *Die Zeit*, 18 April 1997, p. 4.

SPD in the coming elections, Kohl's percentages fell somewhat, but in an ominous sign for the Social Democrats, he still leads the opposition's likely candidates when the same questions were asked. Of prospective SPD voters, 48% viewed Kohl as the strongest leader, compared to 10% for Lafontaine and 32% for Schröder.

The comparison narrowed somewhat when asked to rank the candidates based on their political vision, but Kohl still remained the top choice of SPD voters with 31%, compared to virtually equal shares of 23% and 22% for the Lafontaine and Schröder.⁸⁸ In other categories of the poll, such as "who is most concerned about social justice," Kohl lagged behind his SPD opponents. However, among the general population he ranked higher than Lafontaine and traded places with Schröder in matters of economic competence, personality, and trustworthiness.

The Chancellor's domination of the political scene in Germany may be a long-term disadvantage if it prevents his party or even the opposition from producing a worthy successor. Kohl's stated reason for seeking reelection has been that he wants to ensure the success of the initiatives he has championed, particularly with regard to European monetary and political unification. His fear seems to be that no other German (or European) leader has the political experience and influence to make these visions become reality. If Kohl is reelected his presence will be felt not only in negotiations on the future of the European Union, but in talks with the Russians regarding NATO expansion. The unification of Germany, after all, was arguably the first step in expanding NATO.

Yet by continuing to hang on to power and personally oversee the intricate process of European unification, Kohl may begin to look less like his role model Adenauer and more like the

⁸⁸Gunter Hofmann, "Warten auf die kleine Nebensache," *Die Zeit*, 18 April 1997, p. 4.

longest serving Chancellor in all of German history, Bismarck. The Chancellor of Unity may face the same fate that Henry Kissinger noted befell the Iron Chancellor: "in the end he was not able to establish a design his successors could follow."⁸⁹

⁸⁹Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 135.

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